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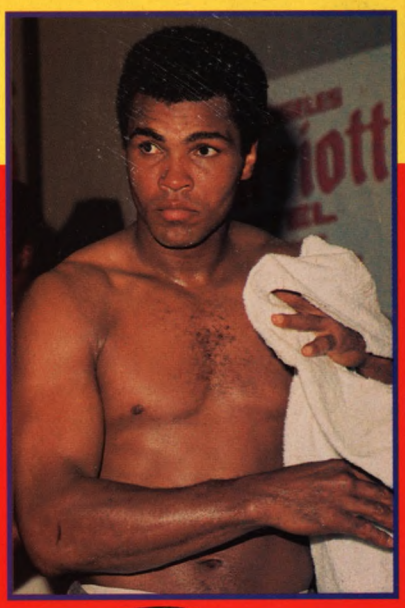

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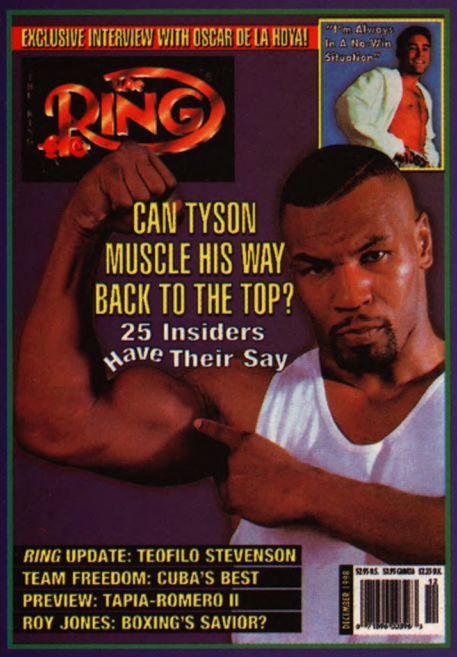

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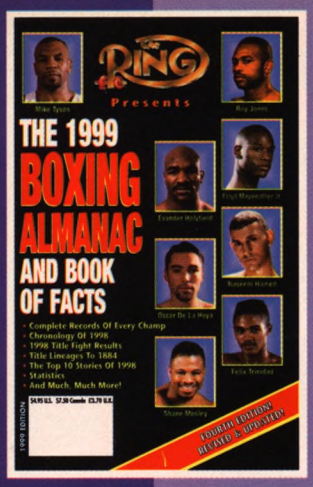

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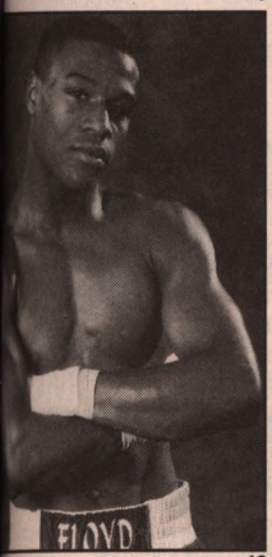

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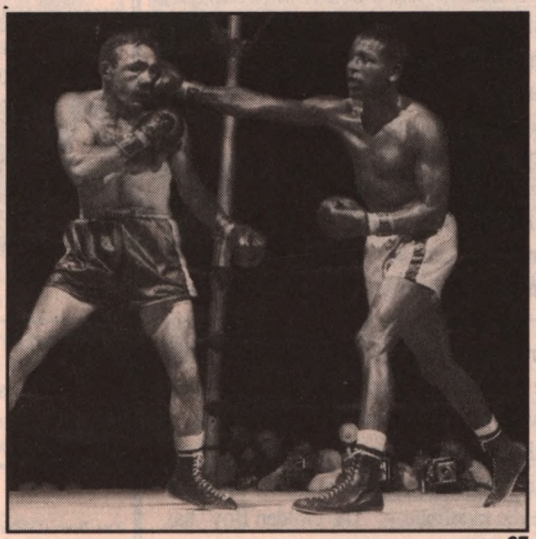

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Cover:
Oscar De La Hoya by Jed Jacobsohn/Allsport
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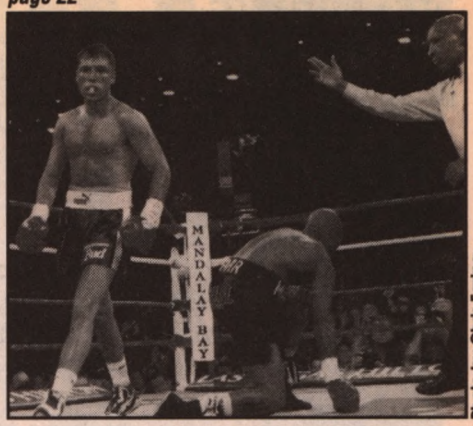

Photo by Chris Farina

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RINGSIDE

It's all good.

Everyone who is happy that the Oscar De La Hoya-Felix Trinidad fight has finally been made should reach around and pat yourself on the back. This is a fight that was made the old-fashioned way—by popular demand. And that means you played an important part in making it happen.

I've written about the power of the marketplace on numerous occasions, urging boxing consumers to exercise their buying power judiciously by boycotting shoddy products. But the other side of that coin is just as important. You have to lobby promoters and television networks on behalf of the fights you want to see. While public demand is virtually impossible to quantify precisely, if the groundswell is big enough, corporate America soon smells the money and swings into action.

One of the most fervent endorsements of the match came when we tallied the results of the THE RING Readers' Poll *(June 1999)*. To the question: "What potential match would you most like to see?," readers voted overwhelmingly for De La Hoya-Trinidad. In fact, the fight blew away its closest rival (Evander Holyfield-Lennox Lewis) by a 41.2 percent to 10.1 percent margin.

Like a fine wine, a good fight has to age properly, and shouldn't be sampled before its time—or after, for that matter. It's immaterial how good a match is; it won't be made until the public demand is such that those who hold the purse strings believe it will generate enough revenue to maximize profits. De La Hoya-Trinidad would probably have been just as good of a fight if it had been made a couple of years ago, but it wouldn't have been anywhere near as lucrative. True, De La Hoya's marquee value was already high back then, but it has subsequently gone into orbit. And you can't discount Trinidad's high-profile victory over Pernell Whitaker earlier this year, which gave him a considerable credibility among the casual fans, whom a pay-per-view event of this magnitude must attract in order to be successful.

An unfortunate side-effect of waiting until a superfight is financially ripe is that sometimes one or both of the fighters involved are past their primes by the time everything comes together. The disappointing heavyweight unification bout between Lewis and Holyfield is a recent example of the phenomenon. But this time, everything seems to be in place for a true classic. Both Felix and Oscar are in their primes, and regardless of the outcome, the winner and his supporters will have the satisfaction of knowing that the victory came when the man in the other corner was at his very best. And that's how it should be.

Another old-fashioned value involved in making the fight was pride. If De La Hoya hadn't insisted that Bob Arum overpay Trinidad in order to make the match, it probably would have been bogged down in negotiations, maybe indefinitely. "The Golden Boy" has his share of detractors, but anybody who still questions his pride and courage is being pigheaded. Oscar passed up a lot of easy paydays to try to prove he's the best welterweight in the world, and win or lose, should be given full credit for taking a meaningful risk.

Boxing suffers more than its share of bummers, many of them self-inflicted. But every now and then the old game gets things right, and the upcoming welterweight unification bout is one of them. All we need now is for the actual fight to live up to expectations, and if does, it just might be the start of giving the boxing public all that it's ever really wanted—the best vs. the best.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

Volume 78, No. 10 October 1999

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THE RING (ISSN: 0035-5410), Vol. 78, No. 10, is published monthly, with an additional issue in December, by London Publishing Co., 7002 W. Butler Pike, Ambler, PA 19002. Periodicals postage paid at Ambler, PA 19002 and additional post offices. Postmaster: Send change of address notices to: THE RING, P.O. Box 2029, Dept. 9, Marion, OH 43302. Single copy price $3.50 ($5.25 in Canada, £2.65 in U.K.). Subscription price $32.45 in the U.S., $42.85 Canada and remaining countries. Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage.

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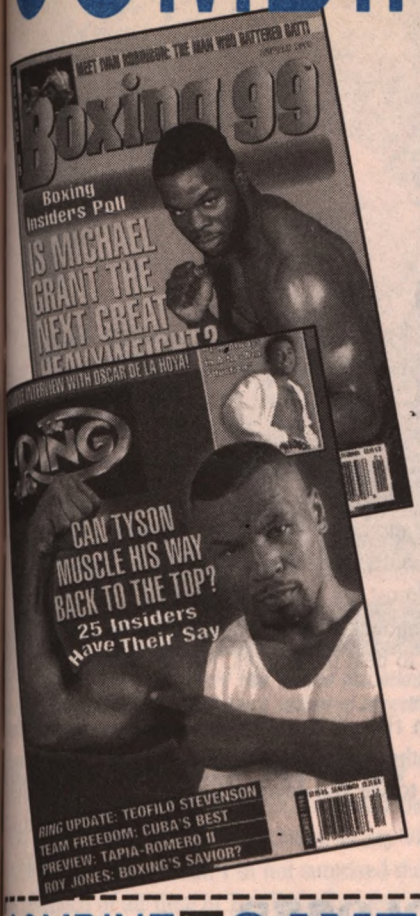

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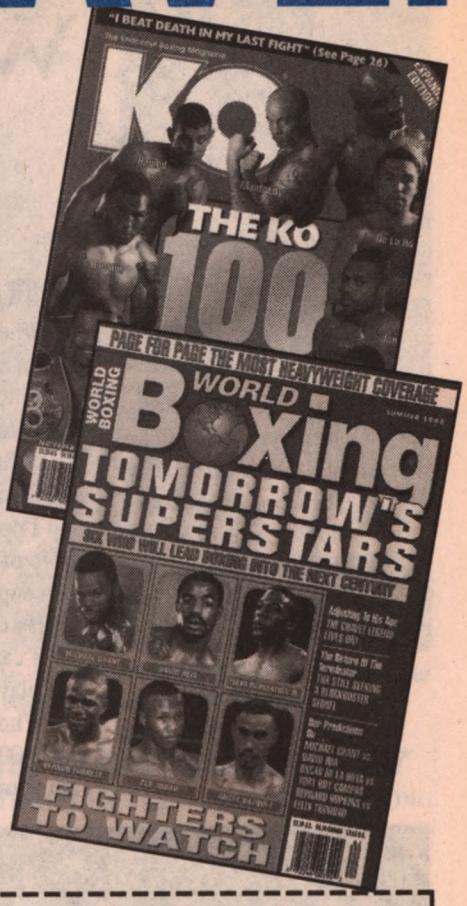

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GRANTING HIS WISH

When I first saw Michael Grant, it was against an outclassed Ed Donaldson back in 199[illegible]. Since then I have followed his career to see how he has been coming along, hoping he would prove to be the real thing. He is. The only problems I see are: 1) He is not aggressive enough; and 2) He takes way too many punches.

If Grant was to go out and try to kayo a guy within the first two rounds, there are only a few who would be left standing—but not for long! We all know Grant is conditioned for a long fight, but I don't want to agonize through 10 rounds with another Obed Sullivan or Ahmad Abdin again. Both of those men hit Grant too much! Grant took out David Izon, who is better than Grant's last two opponents, in five rounds. Grant seems to be almost too comfortable.

He can't be like that against the likes of Ike Ibeabuchi, Hasim Rahman, or David Tua. Those guys can hit. I have no doubt Grant would be able to beat those guys, but he would have to fight, not play around until he gets bored and ends it.

Who's next, Lou Savarese? Izon beat him in five. I know Shannon Briggs turned down $750,000 to fight Grant, but why not challenge another young lion instead of Savarese? Michael, I am your self-proclaimed biggest fan and only want to see you develop into the greatest of all-time.

MATTHEW MORGRET
Decatur, [illegible]

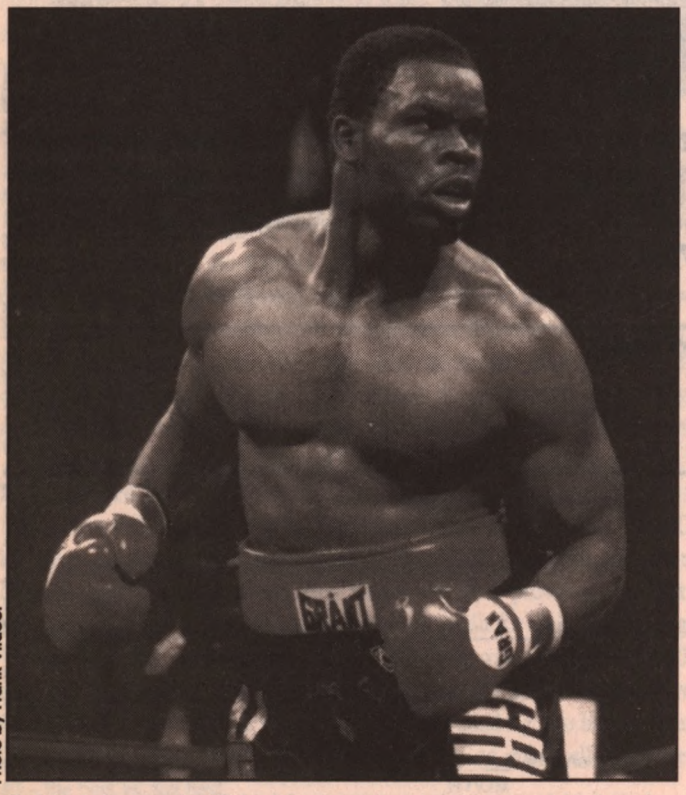


Photo by Frank Vitucci

Undefeated contender Michael Grant can be a great heavyweight champion, writes Matthew Morgret, if he would just come out more aggressively, like he did in his fifth-round stoppage of David Izon.

CASE CLOSED

In the wake of a bad decision such as the one we saw in the Lennox Lewis-Evander Holyfield debacle, you start to hear people in the business begin to talk about implementing an open scoring system. I, for one, think this is a bad idea. Boxing is the only sport in which you either get the definitiveness of a knockout or the suspense of the final verdict. What true fan doesn't love eagerly awaiting the decision in a close fight, with the ring announcer saying, "The winner and new ... " or "The winner and still ... ," whichever the case may be? Who wants to see a boxer go into a prevent defense and start grabbing and running in the last few rounds when he knows he has a comfortable lead?

If anything, I think the open scoring system would render more bad decisions. Judges in a fighter's hometown would be less likely to give close rounds to the visiting fighter, and if he does, the fans will no doubt react to this as soon as they see the scores posted. This will surely intimidate or influence some judges into "fixing" the next round in favor of the hometown boy. All sports are subject to human error; why should boxing be any different? The key is not open scoring. Let's say no to open scoring, and yes to accountability.

MARK GREEN
Irvington, [illegible]

Naseem Hamed beating fighters like Wayne McCullough means nothing. "The Prince" better increase his level of competition, before he loses fans like George Betts, who feels Hamed has a variety of attractive opponents to choose from in Floyd Mayweather, Angel Manfredy, and Erik Morales.

ALI SHOULD KNOW

If anyone can recognize a fix, it would be Muhammad Ali, thanks to his "win" over Sonny Liston. In my view, his only claim to fame was his big mouth. I'm not surprised that he was voted the most overrated of all-time in THE RING Readers' Poll (June 1999).

DR. EDWARD MARTIN
Asheville, NC

STEP UP, PRINCE

I'm glad to see that I'm not the only person ready to see Prince Naseem Hamed step up the competition level of his opponents. I'm an avid Naz fan, but it's becoming harder and harder to get excited about his fights when his competition is so suspect. I noticed in your RING Readers' Poll (June 1999) that fans voted Naz vs. Floyd Mayweather as the sixth-best potential fight they most wanted to see. That matchup was my first choice. The readers also mentioned fighters who I also wanted to see Naz fight as well, such as Angel Manfredy, Erik Morales, Freddie Norwood, Angel Vazquez, and Luisito Espinosa.

Naz, as a loyal fan of yours, please silence your detractors and make your fans happy by fighting the best available competition, because you have plenty of it. Enough is enough. You have made your presence felt as a financial star as well as a mainstream boxing star. Now show us what you're made of and fight the best, because guys like Paul Ingle, Wayne McCullough, and a shot Wilfredo Vazquez have just worn thin.

I'm not an Oscar De La Hoya fan, but he sure earned my respect by fighting Ike Quartey, and if you fight someone like Mayweather, people will have no choice but to respect you—win or lose.

GEORGE BETTS
Pottstown, PA

THE FANS GOT IT RIGHT

Thank you for finally having a fan poll (THE RING Readers' Poll, June 1999). I have been completely ignoring your top 10 pound-for-pound list these past few months. We have an active fighter by the name of Roy Jones, who is unquestionably one of the best pound-for-pound fighters of all-time, second on your list even though the fans voted him number one. Who's to say Sugar Ray Robinson would have been able to land a solid punch on someone like Jones, who is so quick on his feet?

I don't mean any disrespect to the boxing fans and the writers around the world, but fighters like myself (I'm currently boxing as an amateur and looking forward to a pro career in the next year or two) are the best judges in boxing.

I am not your regular Oscar De La Hoya hater. As a matter of fact, I was a loyal De La Hoya fan until his recent fight with Ike Quartey. When HBO asked De La Hoya about a rematch with Quartey, he said there were bigger and better fights out there, and then he goes and fights Oba Carr in his next fight.

The only thing I see De La Hoya giving boxing fans is a bigger and better game of hide-and-seek, as he attempts to duck Fernando Vargas. Boxing is a give-and-take sport, and De La Hoya's heart won't allow him to take much. He is so afraid of getting hit, he does not open up or press the attack like a true champion would. The bottom line is, he'll never be half as good as Roy Jones, Fernando Vargas, Shane Mosley, or Floyd Mayweather.

BUDDY CRAWLEY
Richmond, VA ■

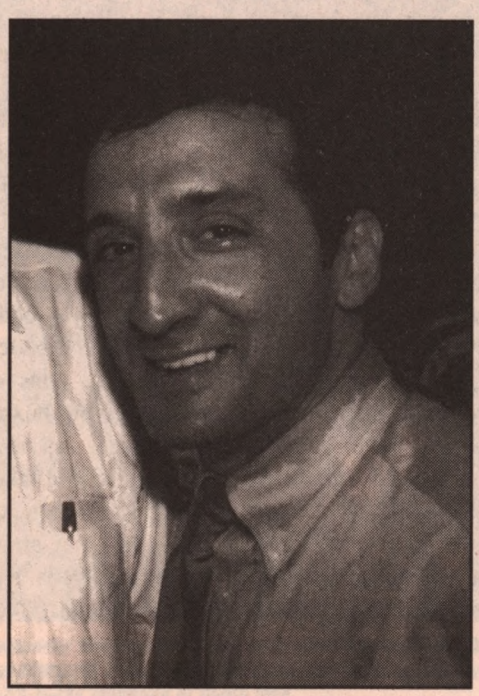
ROUND ONE

SIRB'S GETTING RESULTS

In baseball, you can find statistics as specific as player X's slugging percentage against pitcher Y with runners in scoring position in day games on Astroturf. But somehow, in the miserably disorganized world of boxing, a fighter can step into the ring and nobody—not his opponent, the referee, the athletic commission, even his own cornermen—really knows what his won-loss record is. And that's just plain dangerous. Matchmakers intentionally set up mismatches all the time, but inaccurate records can lead to mismatches being signed unintentionally, with no knowledge of just how unqualified one man is to be in the ring with another. And not having up-to-date information on a fighter can also lead to a competitor who was just knocked out climbing back in the ring a few days later because nobody's aware that he should be under medical suspension.

These are problems that have always plagued boxing, but have become more serious in recent months because Fight Fax, the data base used by the Association of Boxing Commissions (ABC), has been experiencing increasing difficulty getting results from fight cards in Mexico. When unknown Mexican junior bantamweight Fernando Ibarra was kayoed by world-rated Ratanachai Vorapin on January 29 in St. Louis and spent nearly two weeks in a coma afterward (he's since been recovering well), it caught the attention of ABC President Greg Sirb. Though it turned out Ibarra's record was perfectly legitimate, the near-tragic situation made Sirb, who had already been in conversation with WBC President Jose Sulaiman about getting more accurate records out of Mexico, pursue this problem much more seriously.

"I started getting concerned about states like California, Texas, and Arizona, where a lot of Mexican fighters compete," Sirb said. "It puts the state commission in a really tough spot, in terms of whether to let these Mexican fighters fight. It's only a matter of time until a Mexican fighter got hurt in the United States, then we find out he was knocked out earlier in the week."



Sirb: Working hard to avert potential tragedy

At a June 5 meeting involving the ABC, the Mexican Republic Federation (FECOMBOX), and the North American Boxing Federation (NABF), several major steps were taken toward securing the accuracy of Mexican records and implementing a system to be sure of the identity of Mexican fighters competing north of the border. FECOMBOX agreed to send past results to Fight Fax and, going forward, send results to them within a week of the event. It was also decided that by January 1, 2000 all Mexican boxers will have an ID card, and that by August 1, 1999, they will all have a travelling license that they'll need in order to box in the U.S. At the ABC Convention in July, Sirb intends to make sure all the state commissions are on the same page and ready to enforce the new guidelines.

"If a fighter doesn't have his ID and passport, he can't fight in the United States," Sirb said. "We've got to have Mexico on board with us step-for-step, honoring medical suspensions. And I'm optimistic that the situation will improve and we'll receive fight results from Mexico on a timely basis. To have a boxer in front of you that you're not familiar with, that just should not happen anymore."

—Eric Raskin

IN HONOR OF "THE BOMBER"

In 1935, a promising heavyweight contender named Joe Louis signed to fight former world champion Primo Carnera in New York City and set up training at Doc Bier's camp in nearby Pompton Lakes, New Jersey. It was the start of a beautiful relationship.

Through the span of a 12-year title reign and a record 25 title defenses and a post-retirement comeback, the heavyweight king made Doc Bier's his regular training camp. In recognition of "The Brown Bomber's" historic rolé in Pompton Lakes, the former training camp site was dedicated as Joe Louis Memorial Park at a formal ceremony on May 29. A marble monument bearing the likeness of the former champion and featuring a brief biography is the pride of the new park.

Photo by John Biale

Louis lives on in Pompton Lakes

The unveiling ceremony brought out such luminaries as former welterweight and middleweight champion Emile Griffith, former heavyweight contender Chuck Wepner, manager/trainer Lou Duva, and two former heavyweights who played a special role in Louis' life: Jimmy Bivins, the last man to lose to Louis, and Coley Wallace, who played the title role in the 1950s Hollywood production, *The Joe Louis Story*. Also in attendance was the late champion's son, Joseph Louis Barrow Jr.

Duva, who as a teenager would hitchhike to Pompton Lakes to watch Louis train, remembers the bond between the boxer and his adopted hometown. "Joe Louis did a lot of things for the town, like raising money to purchase an ambulance and communications tower, and the town loved him," Duva said. "Joe was such a good man."

—Alan Shelton

WALTER COWANS JR., 1963-1999

In an era when boxers with 20 fights are considered veterans, someone with 129 bouts probably deserves to be called a legend, even if he lost over 100 of them.

At one time, Walter Cowans Jr. hoped to make it into the *Guinness Book Of World Records* for fighting more times than anyone. It was virtually an impossible dream to begin with, and in any case, it ended on May 12 when the 36-year-old Cowans committed suicide in his native Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Cowans: Took his own life

Just two weeks earlier, Cowans had been stopped by Sam Hill in St. Louis for what was officially the 102nd loss of a professional career that started with a loss on September 5, 1982 (he won 26, with one draw). Cowans actually had more fights than are listed under his name, because over the years he also used an array of aliases in rings all over the world.

Losing never bothered him and, in fact, actually helped Cowans keep doing what he loved more than anything else. "The more fights I lost, the more fights I got," he said in a 1989 *Sports Illustrated* article that put him in the company of the infamous Bruce "The Mouse" Strauss and other fighters "who go down so that the hometown heroes can go up."

"Nowadays, a guy goes 18-1 and he thinks his career is over," Cowans said. "Me, I'll fight tonight and tomorrow night and the next night and the next night. I could fight 10 nights in a row. If I can't get in the ring, I might as well be dead."

It sounds like a whopping contradiction, but nobody loses 102 fights without actually knowing how to fight and keep from getting hurt. And in Cowans' case, it also helped that, as former welterweight contender Tyrone Trice said at his funeral, "Walter feared nobody."

—Pete Ehrmann

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESU
5-15-99	**Cesar Soto W 12 Luisito Espinosa**	**Uni**	**WBC f**	**A-**	**B+**	**B**
Soto pulls off upset with body attack and hooks, hooks, and more hooks						
5-21-99	Dana Rosenblatt W 10 Lloyd Bryan	ESPN2	sm	C+	C-	C+
One of these days, Rosenblatt will get a top-10 guy; hey, how's Pazienza's calendar?						
5-22-99	**Floyd Mayweather KO 9 Justin Juuko**	**HBO**	**WBC jl**	**B+**	**C-**	**B**
Mayweather exceptional against late sub for Goyo Vargas; two right hands close the show						
5-22-99	**Oscar De La Hoya KO 11 Oba Carr**	**HBO**	**WBC w**	**A**	**B-**	**B+**
De La Hoya makes it tougher than necessary, as usual; bring on Trinidad!						
5-23-99	Randie Carver W 12 Bo James	FOXSN	sm	C	B+	C-
Carver doesn't titillate, but he's too much for shopworn James						
5-23-99	Greg Wright W 12 Glenn Robinson	FOXSN	lh	C	C	C+
Slick-boxing Wright scores knockdowns in last three rounds to cement upset						
5-28-99	Davey Hilton KO 3 Stephane Ouellet	ESPN2	m	B-	A	B+
Hilton was right; if Ouellet's jaw had any more glass in it, it would be transparent						
5-29-99	**Felix Trinidad KO 4 Hugo Pineda**	**Show**	**IBF w**	**A**	**D-**	**B**
Tito, patient, precise, and lethal, ends it with a bodyshot; bring on De La Hoya!						
6-4-99	Billy Irwin KO 2 John Lark	ESPN2	l	C+	B+	B
If Lark is a top-five lightweight, as the IBF said he was, then John Ruiz is headed for Canastota						
6-4-99	Orlando Canizales KO 6 Richard DeJesus	ESPN2	f	B	A-	B+
Veteran Canizales avenges December '98 decision loss with virtuoso performance						
6-5-99	**Vassiliy Jirov KO 7 Arthur Williams**	**HBO**	**IBF c**	**B**	**B+**	**A-**
Sure it was exciting, but this one had Butterbean wishing he could get down to 190						
6-5-99	**Roy Jones W 12 Reggie Johnson**	**HBO**	**Unified lh**	**A+**	**A-**	**B-**
Further proof that Jones is the most gifted fighter on the planet						
6-6-99	Jorge Luis Gonzalez KO 2 Alex Stewart	FOXSN	h	D	A-	C-
If Gonzalez keeps this up, he could get a shot at the winner of Larry Holmes-Bonecrusher Smith						
6-8-99	Antonio Ramirez W 12 Julio Sanchez-Leon	FOXSN	jl	C+	B+	B
Close all the way; point penalty in the 10th costs Sanchez-Leon the decision						
6-11-99	Cory Spinks W 8 Rodolfo Gomez	ESPN2	jw	C+	B	C+
Spinks has fast hands, no power, and all his teeth; are we sure this is Leon's kid?						
6-11-99	Danny Romero D 10 Enrique Jupiter	ESPN2	jf	B+	C-	B-
Hate to say it, but it may be time for a new trainer for Romero						
6-12-99	John Ruiz KO 7 Fernely Feliz	Show	h	C	D-	C
Don't hate Ruiz for his ridiculous number-one rating; at least he's active						
6-12-99	**Byron Mitchell KO 11 Frankie Liles**	**Show**	**WBA sm**	**B+**	**C+**	**C-**
Mitchell could have done us all a favor by throwing more than a punch a round over the first 10						
6-12-99	Adan Vargas KO 1 Jorge Gallito Reyes	Tel	b	B	C-	B
Vargas rolls on, may get winner of Johnny Tapia-Paulie Ayala						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN–Fox SportsNet; Uni–Univision

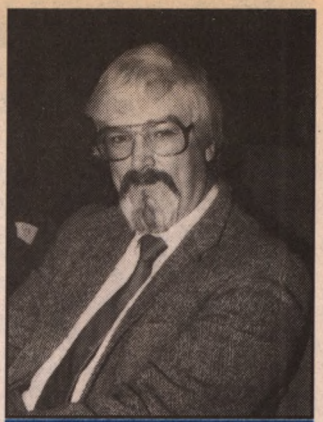
HARRY MULLAN, 1946-1999

Boxing lost one its finest writers and staunchest supporters when Harry Mullan, 53, died of cancer on May 14, in Kent, England. Mullan, born in County Derry, Ireland, was educated at St. Patrick College, Armah, and University College Dublin. He moved to London in 1964, where he met boxing historian and author Gilbert Odd, who encouraged him to pursue a career in boxing journalism.

Mullan joined the staff of the British weekly, *Boxing News*, as a feature writer in '74, and three years later became editor of the venerable publication, a post he held with distinction until '96. Mullan was also a prolific author of boxing books, two of which, *Fighting Words* and *The Great Book Of Boxing*, are classics of the genre.

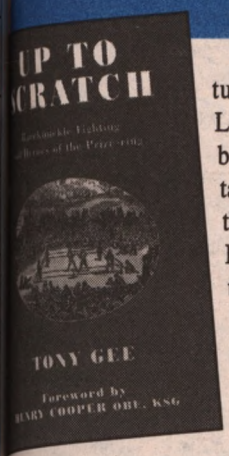
While Mullan's many readers are bound to miss his insightful and elegant prose, those of us lucky enough to have known him personally will never forget his gentle strength, wry wit, and unswerving loyalty.

—Nigel Collins



Mullan: Top journalist dies at age 53

THE BOXING BOOKSHELF



For much of the 18th and 19th centuries, Barnet, the area just north of London, was a hotbed of bareknuckle boxing, with numerous pitched battles taking place in the fields surrounding the village of Whetstone and on nearby Finchley Common. The reasons for this were both geographical and legal. Barnet was not only conveniently close to the capital, its boundary position enabled contests to be easily moved from Middlesex to Hertfordshire, or vice versa, should the local magistrate in either county decide to enforce the law that prohibited prize fighting.

Rather than tackle the entire history of England's bare knuckle era, author Tony Gee, in *Up To Scratch: Bareknuckle Fighting And the Heroes Of The Prize-ring* (Queen Anne Press, 224 pages, £14.99, hardcover), has focused his attention on Barnet's rich boxing history. Many famous bareknuckle bruisers—Tom Johnson, Daniel Mendoza, Jem Belcher, Tom Sayer, Jem Mace—are featured. But especially interesting are some of the epoch's lesser lights, such as David Morgan and Peter O'Bean, the fighting dwarfs, and Sambo Sutton, a mediocre black pugilist who could also dance, sing, and drink while standing on his head, and played the title role in a stage production of *Othello*.

Readers familiar with the colorful prose style of Pierce Egan, the bare knuckle period's most celebrated chronicler, will find Gee's unembroidered style comparatively bland. But his fascinating subject matter and meticulous research make *Up To Scratch* a lively and educational read nonetheless.

—Nigel Collins

Mike Marqusee's problem with Muhammad Ali is that even people appalled by Ali's political militancy in the 1960s have now joined in the deification of the former heavyweight champion, making Ali, in the recent words of *USA Today*, "one of sports marketing's hottest commodities."

It's clear from *Redemption Song: Muhammad Ali And The Spirit Of The '60s* (Verso, 303 pages, $22) that Marqusee believes the Ali bandwagon has room only for true believers like himself, '60s protest troubadour Bob Dylan (whose life and lyrics are given great weight here), and anyone else who hasn't forgiven the United States for the war in Vietnam, racism, and the entire catalog of sins that ostensibly ignited the great cultural upheaval of 30-plus years ago.

"This timely antidote to the apolitical celebration of Ali as 'a great American' revisits the man and the period with a fresh eye," says the back cover. Make that a pink eye, and you're closer to the mark.

"In the '90s we have been told that the causes and complaints of the '60s are redundant, that the conflicts that once surrounded Ali have been resolved," writes Marqusee. "Somehow the rights and wrongs of the hard choices he made have been declared peripheral to his legacy—as if racism and warfare, Islam and the West, personal identity, black leadership, and the use of U.S. military might in the poorer, darker countries were yesterday's issues, no longer pertinent, no longer divisive."

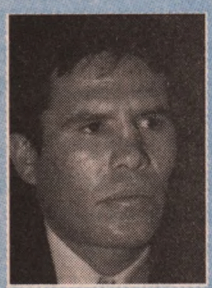
The author pines for the Ali who was "the most reviled figure in the history of American sport," although the three-time former champion surely has challengers for that title. When Jack Johnson became the first black heavyweight champion in 1908, *The Milwaukee Journal*, a major metropolitan newspaper, reported the development under the headline, "Dinge Wins Title." Johnson ended up spieling in a flea circus. Perhaps Marqusee thinks that would be a nobler fate for Ali than the one history has dealt him.

There's not much for the boxing fan here. Ali's fights are viewed only through a leftist socio-cultural-political prism. In mentioning the 1967 unification match against WBA champion Ernie Terrell, Marqusee calls the elongated Terrell a "heavy hitter," which from a purely boxing standpoint, may qualify as the most eye-popping piece of historical revisionism in the book.

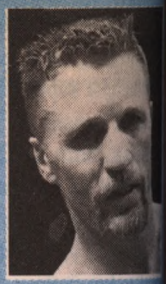
—Pete Ehrmann

OUTSIDE THE ROPES

A quick news report for those who've been locked in an underground hideaway: **Mike Tyson** was released from the Montgomery County (Maryland) Correctional Center on May 24 after serving less than three months of his one-year sentence for assaulting two motorists in 1998. Just hours earlier, Indiana Superior Court Judge **Patricia Gifford** announced her decision to end Tyson's probation for his 1992 rape conviction … In other Tyson-related news, a bill was passed in mid-May that ensures confidentiality of medical information provided by boxers to the Nevada State Athletic Commission. The legislation was a response to Tyson's medical records being posted on the Internet during his 1998 reinstatement hearings … The FBI conducted a raid on **Don King's** office in early-June as part of an investigation into whether the IBF fixed rankings and fights for kickbacks. The investigation had already been going on for several months and had not yet been concluded as we went to press … Just what boxing needs: a new alphabet group! **Fred Levin**, a lawyer who is best known for representing **Roy Jones**, presented a proposal recently to begin the World Boxing League in January 2000. The supposed aim of the project is to replace all the other sanctioning organizations with this single group backed by a corporate sponsor … **Julio Cesar Chavez** was sued in May by **Eleazar Munoz Valdez**, a 25-year-old fan who claimed he went to Chavez' house to get the three-division former champ's autograph, had a few drinks with Chavez, and then was beaten up by Chavez and his bodyguards. Chavez said Munoz, whose mother is the Mexican legend's cook, showed up drunk and fell and hurt himself. Chavez paid Munoz off, and the charges were dropped … In a much more serious case involving a far lower profile fighter, journeyman lightweight **Dezi Ford**, 30, was sentenced in mid-May to eight years in prison for the involuntary manslaughter of his 14-month-old son, Zontius. Prosecutors said Ford caused massive internal injuries to the boy when he playfully boxed with him last December … The WBO proved itself even more suspect in late-May when its General Assembly voted 27-6 in favor of allowing its featherweight champion, **Naseem Hamed**, to make two more voluntary defenses before fighting **Juan Manuel Marquez**, who has been the top contender since October '97. Marquez' well-deserved opportunity to fight "The Prince" will come no earlier than next spring … Former WBA minimumweight champ **Rosendo Alvarez** furthered his reputation as somewhat of an undisciplined bad boy in a strange incident in Managua, Nicaragua, in early-May. Alvarez claimed that after passing out drunk in a taxi with a couple of prostitutes, they robbed him of $5,500 and about $2,000 worth of jewelry. Most of what was stolen was quickly recovered by police. Alvarez insisted at a press conference a few days later that he was going to change his ways … Former top-rated middleweight and super middleweight **Steve Collins** retired for a second time in May after he collapsed while training for a comeback bout. A doctor discovered hardened scar tissue on Collins' brain, and advised that it would be too dangerous for the Irishman to box again. Collins' career record was 36-3 (21).



Chavez: Violent outside the ring?



Collins: Says goodbye again

THE PUNCHLINES

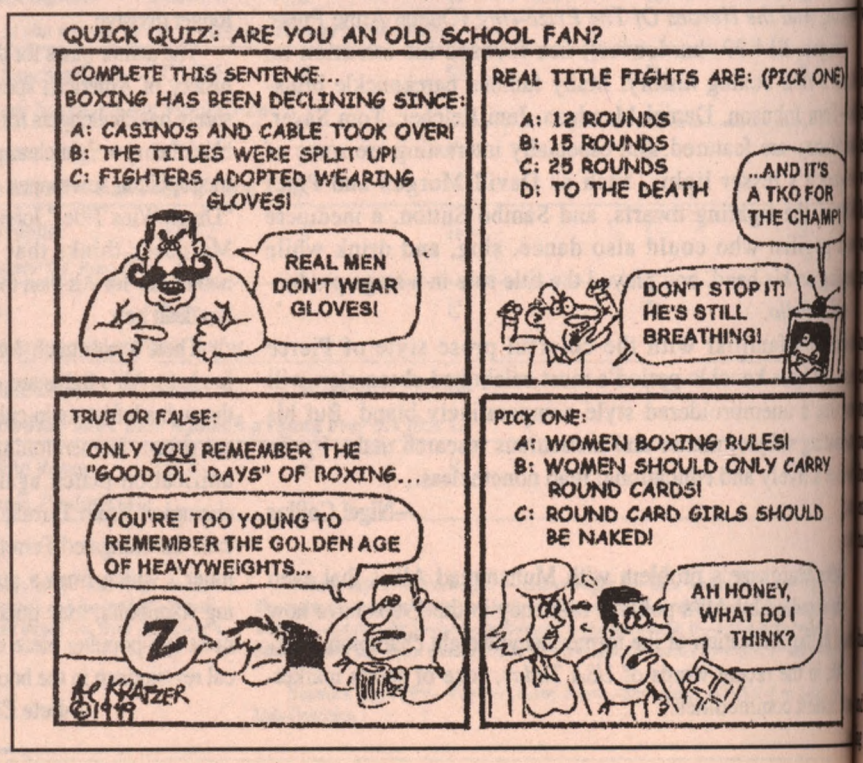
"The yellow he has on the front of his hair is the right color, but in the wrong spot. It should be on his back."

—Junior middleweight contender Bronco McKart on Fernando Vargas, after Raul Marquez was selected instead of McKart for Vargas' July title defense.

"I have never, ever received anything from anybody in return for anything."

—WBC President Jose Sulaiman, responding to allegations that he's taken payoffs

AL KRATZER'S VIEW



"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

(For the period ended June 13, 1999)

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. OSCAR DE LA HOYA
   Welterweight
2. ROY JONES
   Light Heavyweight
3. FELIX TRINIDAD
   Welterweight
4. SHANE MOSLEY
   Junior Welterweight
5. MARK JOHNSON
   Junior Bantamweight
6. RICARDO LOPEZ
   Strawweight
7. FLOYD MAYWEATHER
   Junior Lightweight
8. NASEEM HAMED
   Featherweight
9. JOHNNY TAPIA
   Bantamweight
10. LENNOX LEWIS
    Heavyweight

HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: Previously unranked Vassiliy Jirov blasts his way all the way to the number-three spot by stopping Arthur Williams and capturing the IBF belt. Williams, making his initial defense, slips from third to sixth. Former WBA champion Robert Daniels, who has not fought in more than a year, exits.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Incredible Roy Jones, entrenched at number one, is now the unified champion, thanks to his 12-round decision over then-IBF boss Reggie Johnson, who descends from third to fifth. Glenn Robinson, who debuted two issues ago at 10th, was decisioned by spoiler Greg Wright, and is gone; he's replaced by David Telesco.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Budding knockout artist Byron Mitchell, another new entry, ended the lengthy reign of Frankie Liles, stopping the veteran lefthander in the 11th round to annex the WBA title. Mitchell is now fourth, while Liles slides from second to seventh. Jaffa Ballogou, 10th last issue, leaves to make room for Mitchell.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Oscar De La Hoya and Felix Trinidad both tally knockouts, retaining the top two positions and providing perfect lead-ins for their September 18 unification.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Although he's never officially fought at 140 pounds, former IBF lightweight champion Shane Mosley, who relinquished the belt because of weight-making difficulties and limited opportunities at 135, is installed at number two. This bumps everybody below him down a notch. Reggie Green, who stayed in the ratings last issue despite losing a title bid to Sharmba Mitchell, exits to make room for Mosley.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Everybody rated last issue moves up due to Mosley's defection, and unbeaten Artur Grigorijan moves in at 10th.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Former WBC featherweight champion Goyo Vargas falls from sixth to seventh for pulling out of his scheduled title shot at Floyd Mayweather. Vargas claims illness, but it is widely reported that he was out of shape and unable to make 130 pounds. Anatoly Alexandrov moves up from seventh to sixth.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Freddie Norwood stays at number two after regaining the WBA title from Antonio Cermeno, who sags from seventh to ninth.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: South Africa's Lehlo Ledwaba, who outpointed former WBA bantamweight titlist John Michael Johnson for the IBF title vacated by Vuyani Bungu, is aboard for the first time at number four. Danny Romero, ninth last month, drops out due to his lackluster draw with journeyman Enrique Jupiter.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No changes.

POUND-FOR-POUND: Although Roy Jones is boxing's only unified champion and undoubtedly blessed with more ability than any other fighter in the world, he still doesn't overtake De La Hoya in THE RING's pound-for-pound derby. That's because it's not a list of who has the most pound-for-pound ability. It's a list of who makes the most of their talents, and that's still "The Golden Boy." De La Hoya kept punching until he finally bombed Oba Carr into submission in the 11th round, and if Jones had fought with as much passion, Reggie Johnson wouldn't have heard the final bell either. And when it comes to the difference between these future Hall of Famers, attitude is everything. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended June 13, 1999

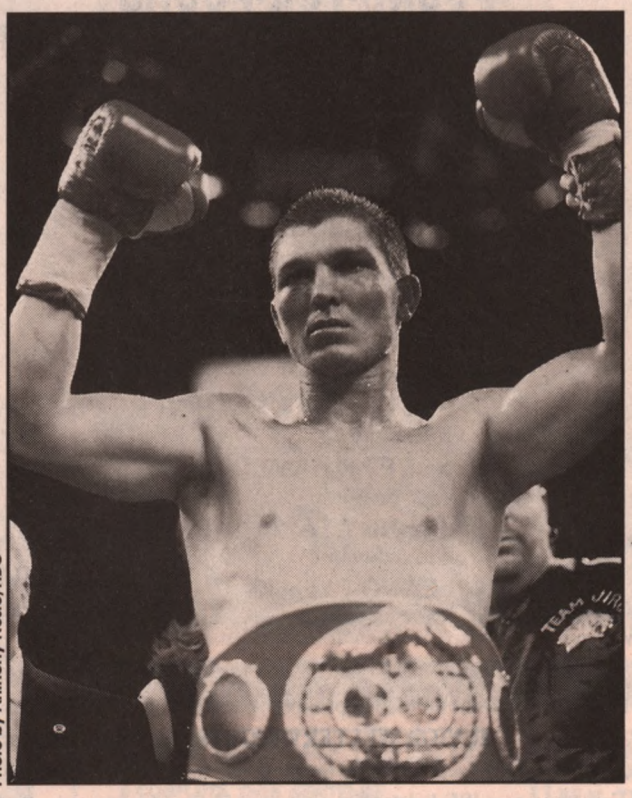


Photo by Anthony Neste/HBO

New IBF cruiser champ Vassiliy Jirov debuts at number three

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

In each division, fighters are ranked according to their abilities and accomplishments.

Being champion does not necessarily mean a fighter will be rated at the top of his weight class.

These ratings reflect how the best fighters in the world rate against one another.

Ratings By The Editors

Records By Fight Fax Inc.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

1. **LENNOX LEWIS** England *34-1-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD** Fairburn, GA *36-3-1 (WBA/IBF Champ)*
3. **IKE IBEABUCHI** Dallas, TX *20-0*
4. **MICHAEL GRANT** Norristown, PA *29-0*
5. **MIKE TYSON** Catskill, NY *46-3*
6. **DAVID TUA** Totowa, NJ *33-1*
7. **ANDREW GOLOTA** Chicago, IL *33-3*
8. **HASIM RAHMAN** Baltimore, MD *31-1*
9. **CHRIS BYRD** Flint, MI *28-1*
10. **SHANNON BRIGGS** New York, NY *31-2*

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

1. **FABRICE TIOZZO** France *40-1 (WBA Champ)*
2. **JUAN CARLOS GOMEZ** Germany *27-0 (WBC Champ)*
3. **VASSILIY JIROV** Kazakhstan *21-0 (IBF Champ)*
4. **JOHNNY NELSON** England *33-12-1*
5. **MARCELO DOMINGUEZ** Argentina *26-3-1*
6. **ARTHUR WILLIAMS** Las Vegas, NV *30-5-1*
7. **IMAMU MAYFIELD** New Brunswick, NJ *19-2*
8. **SAUL MONTANA** Mexico *33-6*
9. **KENNY KEENE** Emmett, ID *45-3*
10. **CARL THOMPSON** England *24-5*

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight limit: 175 pounds

1. **ROY JONES** Pensacola, FL *40-1 (WBC/WBA/IBF Champ)*
2. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI** Germany *40-0*
3. **GRACIANO ROCCHIGIANI** Germany *40-4-1*
4. **LOU DEL VALLE** Bronx, NY *28-2*
5. **REGGIE JOHNSON** Houston, TX *39-6-1*
6. **MICHAEL NUNN** Davenport, IA *54-4*
7. **ERIC HARDING** Philadephia, PA *16-0-1*
8. **MONTELL GRIFFIN** Chicago, IL *37-2*
9. **ANTONIO TARVER** Orlando, FL *13-0*
10. **DAVID TELESCO** Port Chester, NY *21-2*

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

1. **JOE CALZAGHE** Wales *27-0*
2. **RICHIE WOODHALL** England *25-1 (WBC Champ)*
3. **SVEN OTTKE** Germany *15-0 (IBF Champ)*
4. **BYRON MITCHELL** Ozark, AL *20-0 (WBA Champ)*
5. **CHARLES BREWER** Philadelphia, PA *33-6*
6. **THOMAS TATE** Houston, TX *36-5*
7. **FRANKIE LILES** N. Hollywood, CA *32-2*
8. **ROBIN REID** England *26-2-1*
9. **VINNY PAZIENZA** Cranston, RI *45-7*
10. **MADS LARSEN** Denmark *29-1*

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS** Philadelphia, PA *35-2-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **WILLIAM JOPPY** Washington, D.C. *26-1-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **KEITH HOLMES** Washington, D.C. *33-2 (WBC Champ)*
4. **HASSINE CHERIFI** France *26-3-1*
5. **ANTWUN ECHOLS** Davenport, IA *22-2-1*
6. **OTIS GRANT** Canada *31-2-1*
7. **RYAN RHODES** England *19-1*
8. **JULIO CESAR GREEN** Brooklyn, NY *25-3*
9. **ROBERT McCRACKEN** England *33-0*
10. **ROBERT ALLEN** Atlanta, GA *23-3*

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

1. **FERNANDO VARGAS**
   Oxnard, CA *16-0 (IBF Champ)*
2. **DAVID REID**
   Philadelphia, PA *12-0 (WBA Champ)*
3. **LAURENT BOUDOUANI**
   France *38-3-1*
4. **FRANCISCO CASTILLEJO**
   Spain *45-4 (WBC Champ)*
5. **HARRY SIMON**
   Namibia *18-0*
6. **KEITH MULLINGS**
   Brooklyn, NY *16-5-1*
7. **YORY BOY CAMPAS**
   Mexico *72-3*
8. **WINKY WRIGHT**
   St. Petersburg, FL *39-2*
9. **BRONCO McKART**
   Monroe, MI *37-2*
10. **TONY MARSHALL**
    Albany, NY *31-7-6*

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Whittier, CA *31-0 (WBC Champ)*
2. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Puerto Rico *35-0 (IBF Champ)*
3. **IKE QUARTEY**
   Ghana *34-1-1*
4. **JAMES PAGE**
   Pittsburg, CA *24-3 (WBA Champ)*
5. **PERNELL WHITAKER**
   Norfolk, VA *41-3-1*
6. **JOSE LUIS LOPEZ**
   Mexico *42-4-2*
7. **OBA CARR**
   Detroit, MI *48-3-1*
8. **VERNON FORREST**
   Atlanta, GA *28-0*
9. **SHANNAN TAYLOR**
   Australia *24-0-1*
10. **WILFREDO RIVERA**
    Puerto Rico *29-3-1*

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

1. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. *45-2 (WBA Champ)*
2. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA *32-0*
3. **TERRONN MILLETT**
   St. Louis, MO *21-1-1 (IBF Champ)*
4. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Australia *22-1-1*
5. **MIGUEL ANGEL GONZALEZ**
   Mexico *43-1-1*
6. **VINCE PHILLIPS**
   Las Vegas, NV *39-4*
7. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY *20-0*
8. **JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ**
   Mexico *101-3-2*
9. **ANTONIO DIAZ**
   Coachella, CA *27-2*
10. **RANDALL BAILEY**
    Miami, FL *19-0*

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

1. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO *26-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **ANGEL MANFREDY**
   Gary, IN *27-3-1*
3. **JULIEN LORCY**
   France *41-1-2 (WBA Champ)*
4. **CESAR BAZAN**
   Mexico *34-3-1*
5. **ISRAEL CARDONA**
   Hartford, CT *31-2*
6. **IVAN ROBINSON**
   Philadelphia, PA *27-3*
7. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ *29-4*
8. **COLIN DUNNE**
   England *29-1*
9. **JEAN-BAPTISTE MENDY**
   France *53-7-2*
10. **ARTUR GRIGORIJAN**
    Uzbekistan *26-0*

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Grand Rapids, MI *21-0 (WBC Champ)*
2. **TAKANORI HATAKEYAMA**
   Japan *22-0-2 (WBA Champ)*
3. **ROBERTO GARCIA**
   Oxnard, CA *32-0 (IBF Champ)*
4. **YONG SOO CHOI**
   South Korea *24-3-1*
5. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Austin, TX *26-1*
6. **ANATOLY ALEXANDROV**
   Kazakhstan *35-3*
7. **GOYO VARGAS**
   Mexico *38-6-1*
8. **DIEGO CORRALES**
   Sacramento, CA *27-0*
9. **JOHN BROWN**
   Atlantic City, NJ *19-6*
10. **SAUL DURAN**
    Mexico *27-3-1*

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

1. **NASEEM HAMED**
   England *32-0*
2. **FRED NORWOOD**
   St. Louis, MO *34-0-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **CESAR SOTO**
   Mexico *53-7-2 (WBC Champ)*
4. **VUYANI BUNGU**
   South Africa *37-2*
5. **LUISITO ESPINOSA**
   Philippines *44-8*
6. **DERRICK GAINER**
   Pensacola, FL *28-4*
7. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
   Mexico *29-1*
8. **MANUEL MEDINA**
   Mexico *56-10 (IBF Champ)*
9. **ANTONIO CERMENO**
   Venezuela *33-3*
10. **ANGEL VAZQUEZ**
    Hartford, CT *17-0*

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

1. **ERIK MORALES**
   Mexico *33-0 (WBC Champ)*
2. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Mexico *48-2*
3. **NESTOR GARZA**
   Mexico *36-1 (WBA Champ)*
4. **LEHLO LEDWABA**
   South Africa *28-1-1 (IBF Champ)*
5. **WAYNE McCULLOUGH**
   Las Vegas, NV *22-2*
6. **KENNEDY McKINNEY**
   Memphis, TN *33-4-1*
7. **ENRIQUE SANCHEZ**
   Mexico *24-1-1*
8. **MBULELO BOTILE**
   South Africa *24-1*
9. **CARLOS NAVARRO**
   Los Angeles, CA *19-0*
10. **JUAN CARLOS RAMIREZ**
    Mexico *17-2*

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

1. **TIM AUSTIN**
   Cincinnati, OH *19-0-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **JOHNNY TAPIA**
   Albuquerque, NM *46-0-2 (WBA Champ)*
3. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM**
   Thailand *22-1 (WBC Champ)*
4. **NANA KONADU**
   Ghana *40-4-1*
5. **JORGE ELIECER JULIO**
   Colombia *41-1*
6. **JULIO GAMBOA**
   Nicaragua *24-4*
7. **JOICHIRO TATSUYOSHI**
   Japan *17-5-1*
8. **PAULIE AYALA**
   Ft. Worth, TX *27-1*
9. **ADAN VARGAS**
   Mexico *31-1-1*
10. **DARIO AZUAGA**
    Paraguay *44-0-1*

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

1. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Washington, D.C. *37-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **IN JOO CHO**
   South Korea *15-0 (WBC Champ)*
3. **JESUS ROJAS**
   Venezuela *32-7-3 (WBA Champ)*
4. **GERRY PENALOSA**
   Philippines *40-2-2*
5. **YOKTHAI SITHOAR**
   Thailand *18-1-1*
6. **LUIS BOLANO**
   Colombia *31-0*
7. **RATANACHAI VORAPIN**
   Thailand *35-4*
8. **JOEL LUNA-ZARATE**
   Mexico *32-3-2*
9. **ERIC MOREL**
   Madison, WI *20-0*
10. **VICTOR GODOY**
    Argentina *29-1*

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   Philippines *25-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **LEO GAMEZ**
   Venezuela *32-6-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **MAURICIO PASTRANA**
   Colombia *21-0*
4. **CHATCHAI DUTCHBOY GYM**
   Thailand *34-2*
5. **IRENE PACHECO**
   Colombia *22-0 (IBF Champ)*
6. **HUGO SOTO**
   Argentina *50-6-2*
7. **JOSE BONILLA**
   Venezuela *25-5*
8. **SAEN SOR PLOENCHIT**
   Thailand *33-1*
9. **ALEJANDRO MONTIEL**
   Mexico *39-3*
10. **DAVID GUERAULT**
    France *15-0*

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

1. **SAMAN SORJATURONG**
   Thailand *40-2-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **ROSENDO ALVAREZ**
   Nicaragua *25-1-1*
3. **PICHITNOI C. SIRIWAT**
   Thailand *21-1 (WBA Champ)*
4. **BABY JAKE MATLALA**
   South Africa *50-10-2*
5. **WILL GRIGSBY**
   St. Paul, MN *14-1-1 (IBF Champ)*
6. **MELCHOR COB CASTRO**
   Mexico *55-6-4*
7. **JOMA GAMBOA**
   Philippines *25-4-1*
8. **JORGE ARCE**
   Mexico *20-2-1*
9. **JOSE SANJUANELO**
   Colombia *12-0*
10. **YEOSAM CHOI**
    South Korea *18-1*

STRAWWEIGHT
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

1. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Mexico *47-0-1 (WBC/WBA Champ)*
2. **ZOLANI PETELO**
   South Africa *14-2-2 (IBF Champ)*
3. **WANDEE CHOR CHAREON**
   Thailand *23-3*
4. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand *38-1*
5. **SONGKRAM PORPAOIN**
   Thailand *20-2-1*
6. **ROCKY LIN**
   Philippines *26-2*
7. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico *20-1-1*
8. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
   Columbia *31-2*
9. **ANDY TABANAS**
   Philippines *35-3-1*
10. **OSWALDO GUERRERO**
    Mexico *26-4*

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

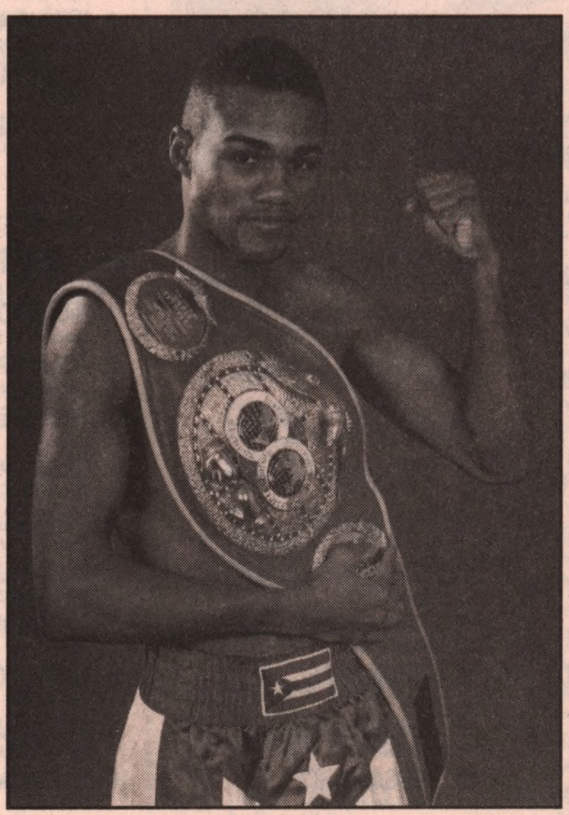
RESCUE 1-4-7

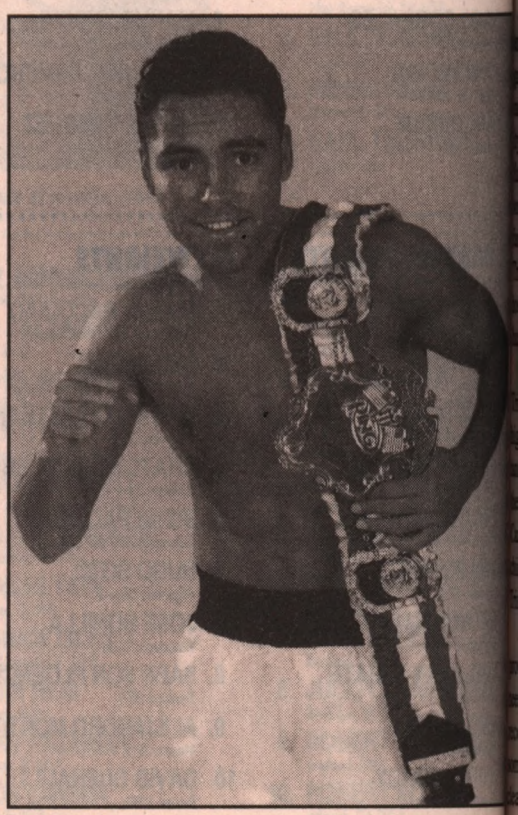
Leave it to our good buddies, the welterweights, to try and pull the heavyweights' big butts out of the flames once again. Back in the late-1970s and early-'80s, it was the Fistic Fab Four of Sugar Ray Leonard, Thomas Hearns, Roberto Duran, and Wilfred Benitez who provided riveting theater at a time when a washed-up Muhammad Ali was making tear-jerking comebacks, and Larry Holmes' (cess) pool of challengers was featuring too many Lorenzo Zanons and not enough Mike Weavers.

Now, in September in Las Vegas, Oscar De La Hoya and Felix Trinidad get a chance to rid the fight game of the stench that has been hanging over it ever since Evander Holyfield's creaky bones, Lennox Lewis' indifference, and a whopper of a scoring controversy combined to make March 13 a night that will live in infamy. De La Hoya-Trinidad, a matchup of two undefeated world champion powerhitters in their prime, has been on the "Fights We Want To See" list even longer than Rosie O'Donnell vs. Kathie Lee Gifford in a Texas Death Match. At times, taking into account all the politics and contract hassles, we thought it would never happen. Then the money started moving mountains.

This is the biggie. The center court pairing that resulted when De La Hoya pulled out a tough five-setter against Ike Quartey, and Trinidad struggled a bit before dispatching Pernell Whitaker in four sets in the semifinals. It's WBC vs. IBF. Mexican-American vs. Puerto Rican. Let the passions flow.

And let's hope that either De La Hoya or Trinidad makes like the New York Giants' Bobby Thomson and wins this thing with a shot heard 'round the world. Let's hope this fight features the

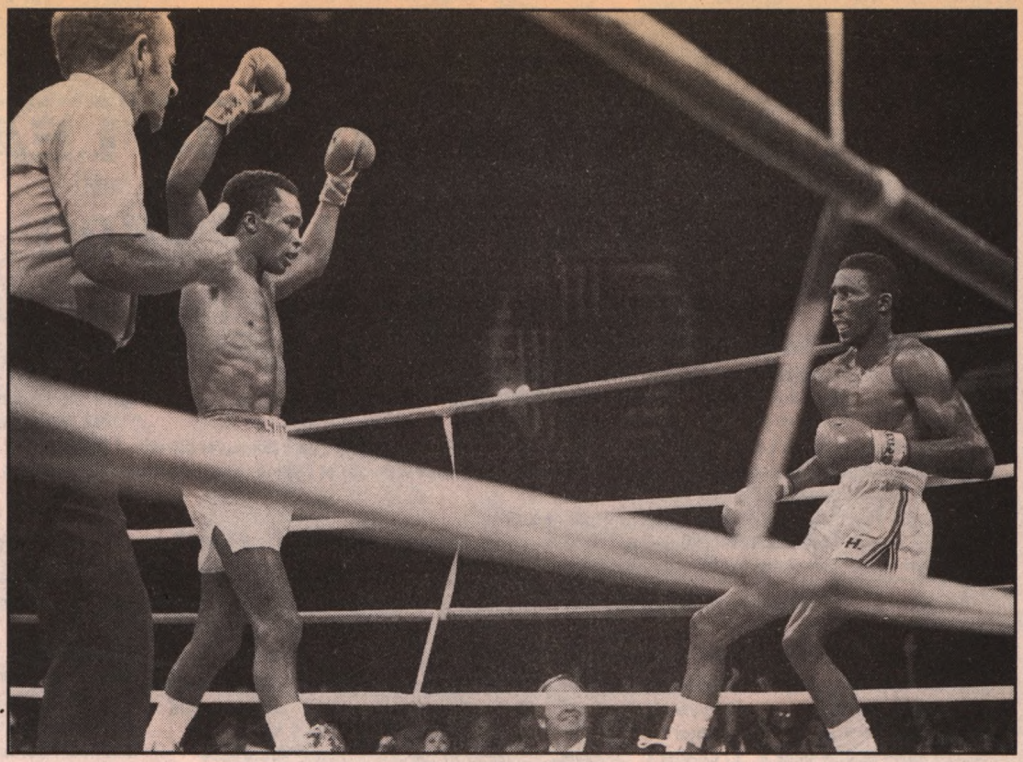




Trinidad and De La Hoya need to deliver—big time

d of battle scenes that make ing *Private Ryan* look like *kespeare In Love*. Most of let's hope it's ending passes Cosell/Sucrets Test. To do t, it has to be so action-cked, or provides such ma, that it would have made late Howard Cosell hoarse n screaming about it at ring-e (Think Leonard-Benitez, orge Foreman-Joe Frazier I, reman-Ron Lyle, etc.).

In the semis of that unoffi-l welterweight tournament d earlier this year, De La ya climbed off the canvas inst Quartey and delivered nal-round rally worthy of a ll of Famer. In the process, once and for all oven-sted the "chicken" nick-me that had foolishly been g on him but really ought have been embroidered on shirt pocket of his promoter, Bob Arum.



Boxing needs a great welterweight fight like Leonard-Hearns

Trinidad, meanwhile, controlled most of the action against a ll-cagey "Sweet Pea," displaying more versatility than he'd ever en forced to previously. The two champions' wins were impres-e in many ways, but to the dismay of those of us power junkies, h fights went the—*groan*—distance.

With apologies to "Slapsie" Maxie Rosenbloom, Willie Pep, d the aforementioned Mr. Pea, boxing is a contact sport. This is a me of knockouts. "Hit Man" Hearns had one-trillionth the charis-a of the cavity-causing Leonard and about a quarter of the public-, but he achieved purse parity with the Olympic hero because he tened people in picturesque fashion. Punching power is the rea-n a lot of us, to this day, probably overrate one of Hearns' most nous victims, former WBA welterweight king Pipino Cuevas. e Mexican couldn't box or slip a punch, but whenever his left k connected, he looked like Sugar Ray Robinson. Prom night n't wobbled as many knees as Cuevas did.

Despite all their dazzling destructions, De La Hoya and nidad have both failed to provide a crunch-punch finish in two h-profile bouts. Not only was De La Hoya extended the dis-ce against Whitaker and Quartey, but he barely escaped with decisions. And Trinidad couldn't stop Sweet Pea or Hector macho. Granted, Quartey, Whitaker, and Camacho have strong ns, but is anyone going to remember that when De La Hoya and nidad are one day compared to the all-time best?

Just as "The Golden Boy" badly needed the kind of mettle-ving opportunity he received against Quartey, and "Tito" badly ded a win over an upper-echelon fighter like Whitaker on his ord, so, too, does the winner of De La Hoya-Trinidad need nething big in September: a spectacular knockout. No decision, ar-cut or otherwise, will do. Part of achieving greatness is com-ing the stats, and the other part is creating lasting images of brilliance. Like Hearns annihilating Cuevas with two right hands, Leonard pole-axing Davey Boy Green, Duran flooring the rock-jawed Carlos Palomino, and the usually light-hitting Benitez putting Maurice Hope to sleep. Even Donald Curry, who ultimately failed to fulfill his promise, grasped that sense of high drama when he blitzed Milton McCrory in two rounds of a 1985 title-unification bout that was, at the time, the most eagerly awaited welterweight clash since Leonard-Hearns I.

Though you'd have a hard time convincing the recently wrecked Oba Carr, ever since De La Hoya climbed to welterweight, there's been some suspicion that he doesn't hit as hard as he did at lightweight and junior welter. And Trinidad, who was always considered a deadly assassin, has lately had some pundits wondering if he only possesses actual one-punch power when he's facing two-bit opposition.

De La Hoya is a mainstream superstar with a string of endorsements, a calendar full of interview requests, and a female following whose devotion is downright frightening. We've seen him be Ricky Martin, now, in his most important encounter to date, let's see him be Rocky Marciano. If he's not up to that challenge, then let's see Trinidad, a hero on his beloved island of Puerto Rico but still a mystery to much of the American mainstream, increase his popularity the best way a fighter can these days. That's by giving the oft-shafted ticket buyers and pay-per-view customers some bang, literally, for their big bucks.

If these two hombres want to one day be mentioned in the same sentence as Leonard, Hearns, and the other truly great welterweights, it's time for an explosive declaration of intent. While they're at it, De La Hoya and Trinidad can remind us what's supposed to happen in a title-unification bout when two world champions get paid wads of cash and enjoy weeks of hype.

Forget the heavyweight helter-skelter. Gimme welter shelter. ■

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Example: Lennox Leiws KOs David Tua to defend his title. Lewis picks up 3 points for the win, 1 for the KO, 1 for defending his title, and 1 for fighting a top 10 contender, for a total of 6 points. Tua loses 3 points for the loss and 1 for the KO, but gains 1 point for fighting a champ resulting in a loss of 3 points

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- ❑ Oscar De La Hoya
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- ❑ Floyd Mayweather
- ❑ Erik Morales
- ❑ Shane Mosley
- ❑ Johnny Tapia
- ❑ Felix Trinidad

Top Contenders II
- ❑ Marco A. Barrera
- ❑ Vuyani Bungu
- ❑ Israel Cardona
- ❑ Miguel A. Gonzales
- ❑ Angel Manfredy
- ❑ Juan Marquez
- ❑ Robert McCracken
- ❑ Ike Quartey

Future Stars
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- ❑ Joel Cassamayor
- ❑ Diego Corrales
- ❑ Ramon Ledon
- ❑ Eric Morel
- ❑ Diego Morrales
- ❑ Antonio Tarver
- ❑ Adan Vargas

Longshots
- ❑ Henry Akinwande
- ❑ Johnny Bredahl
- ❑ Lou Del Valle
- ❑ Herbie Hide
- ❑ Guillermo Jones
- ❑ Andrei Pestraiev
- ❑ Rito Ruvalcaba
- ❑ Billy Schwer

Always In It
- ❑ Anatoly Alexandrov
- ❑ Yory Boy Campas
- ❑ Oba Carr
- ❑ Lincoln Carter
- ❑ Andrew Golota
- ❑ Reggie Johnson
- ❑ Hasim Rahman
- ❑ Ivan Robinson

Solid Contenders
- ❑ Reggie Green
- ❑ Eric Harding
- ❑ Andrew Lewis
- ❑ Jose Luis Lopez
- ❑ Bronko McKart
- ❑ Burt Schenk
- ❑ Will Taylor
- ❑ David Telesco

On Top Of Their Game
- ❑ Tim Austin
- ❑ Naseem Hamed
- ❑ Bernard Hopkins
- ❑ Lennox Lewis
- ❑ Ricardo Lopez
- ❑ Freddie Norwood
- ❑ David Reid
- ❑ Fernando Vargas

Almost At The Top
- ❑ Roberto Garcia
- ❑ Nestor Garza
- ❑ Keith Holmes
- ❑ Steve Johnston
- ❑ William Joppy
- ❑ Sharmba Mitchell
- ❑ James Page
- ❑ Kastya Tszyu

Something To Prove
- ❑ Luisito Espinosa
- ❑ Julio Cesar Green
- ❑ Junior Jones
- ❑ Wayne McCullough
- ❑ Michael Nunn
- ❑ Danny Romero
- ❑ Dana Rosenblatt
- ❑ Mike Tyson

Really Long Longshots
- ❑ Shannon Briggs
- ❑ John Brown
- ❑ Larry Donald
- ❑ Davey Hilton
- ❑ Paul Ingle
- ❑ Reynata Jamili
- ❑ Brian Nielsen
- ❑ Paul Spadafora

Got The Goods
- ❑ Pablo Chacon
- ❑ Darrel Coley
- ❑ Vernon Forrest
- ❑ Derrick Gainer
- ❑ Ryan Rhodes
- ❑ Goyo Vargas
- ❑ Angel Vazquez
- ❑ Winky Wright

Solid Contenders II
- ❑ Randall Bailey
- ❑ Carlos Barreto
- ❑ Chris Byrd
- ❑ Antonio Diaz
- ❑ Diabolys Hurtado
- ❑ Raul Marquez
- ❑ Kevin Palmer
- ❑ Lakva Sim

Top Contenders
- ❑ Rosendo Alvarez
- ❑ Paulie Ayala
- ❑ Antwun Echols
- ❑ Michael Grant
- ❑ Ike Ibeabuchi
- ❑ Zab Judah
- ❑ Dariusz Michalzczewski
- ❑ David Tua

Ripe For The Picking
- ❑ Javier Castillejo
- ❑ Evander Holyfield
- ❑ Lehonolo Ledwaba
- ❑ Julien Lorcy
- ❑ Manuel Medina
- ❑ Teronn Millett
- ❑ Jesus Rojas
- ❑ Cesar Soto

Not Enough Press
- ❑ Mbulelo Botile
- ❑ Collin Dunne
- ❑ Nana Konadu
- ❑ Ahmed Kotiev
- ❑ Lovemore N'Dou
- ❑ Graciano Rocchigiani
- ❑ Shannan Taylor
- ❑ Mamadou Thiam

Hang 'em Up, Please
- ❑ Hector Camacho
- ❑ Julio Cesar Chavez
- ❑ Arturo Gatti
- ❑ Larry Holmes
- ❑ Kevin Kelley
- ❑ Kennedy McKinney
- ❑ Rafael Ruelas
- ❑ Pernell Whitaker

Past Glory
- ❑ Robert Allen
- ❑ Laurent Boudouani
- ❑ Antonio Cermeno
- ❑ Hassine Cherifi
- ❑ Montel Griffin
- ❑ Keith Mullings
- ❑ Gerry Penalosa
- ❑ Vince Phillips

Young Guns
- ❑ Terrance Cauthen
- ❑ Guty Espadas Jr.
- ❑ Sam Garr
- ❑ Eric Harding
- ❑ Kofi Jantuah
- ❑ Ed Mahone
- ❑ Cory Spinks
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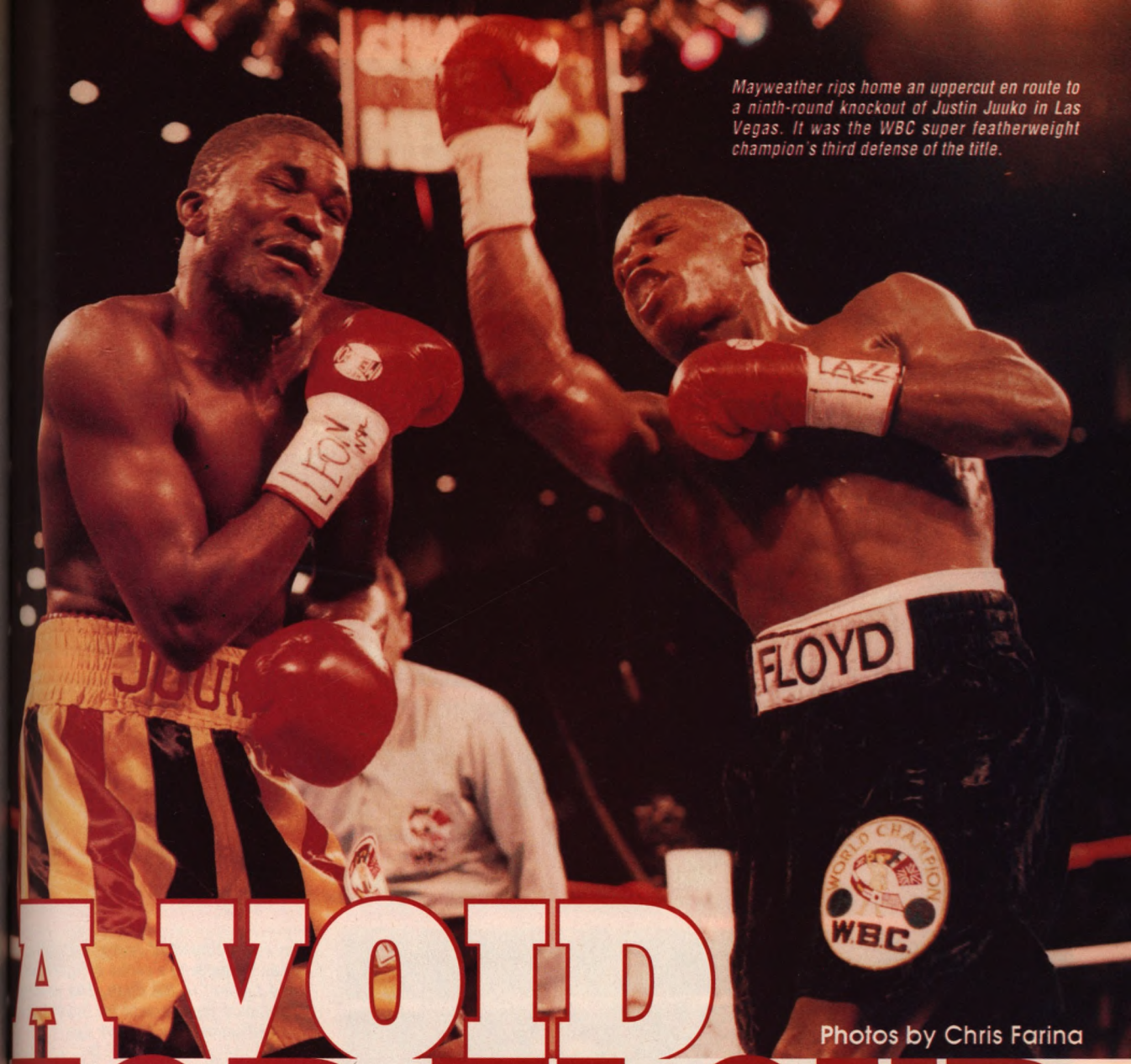


Mayweather rips home an uppercut en route to a ninth-round knockout of Justin Juuko in Las Vegas. It was the WBC super featherweight champion's third defense of the title.

Photos by Chris Farina

A VOID FOR FLOYD

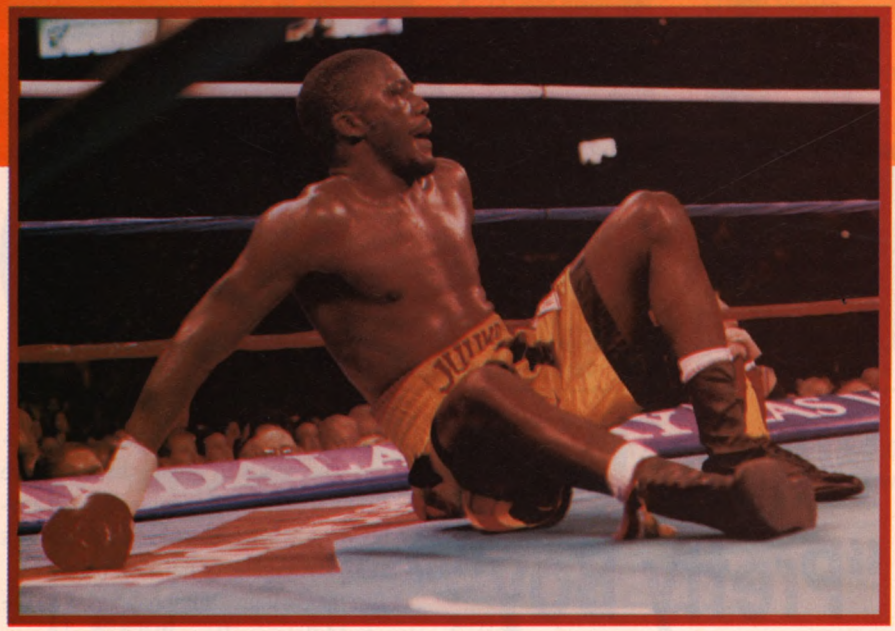
Where Does "Pretty Boy" Go From Here?

By Ivan **Goldman**

When he ran out of new lands to conquer, legend has it that the youthful Alexander the Great wept. It's something Floyd Mayweather would understand.

"Pretty Boy Floyd," who in 1998 swept through the formidable Genaro "Chicanito" Hernandez and Angel "El Diablo" Manfredy as though they were a couple of cumulus clouds, established himself at the tender age of 21 as the best 130-pound fighter in the world—an awesomely talented kid who was still getting better. There weren't a whole lot of arguments from anybody when Mayweather was awarded THE RING'S 1998 Fighter of the Year belt.

But then a funny thing happened on the way to Millionaire Row. The new champion looked around the 130-pound division and saw nothing but easy pickings. And a steady diet of soft opposition just won't generate big-time purses—not the kinds of purses routinely enjoyed by Oscar De La Hoya, who has become the barometer by



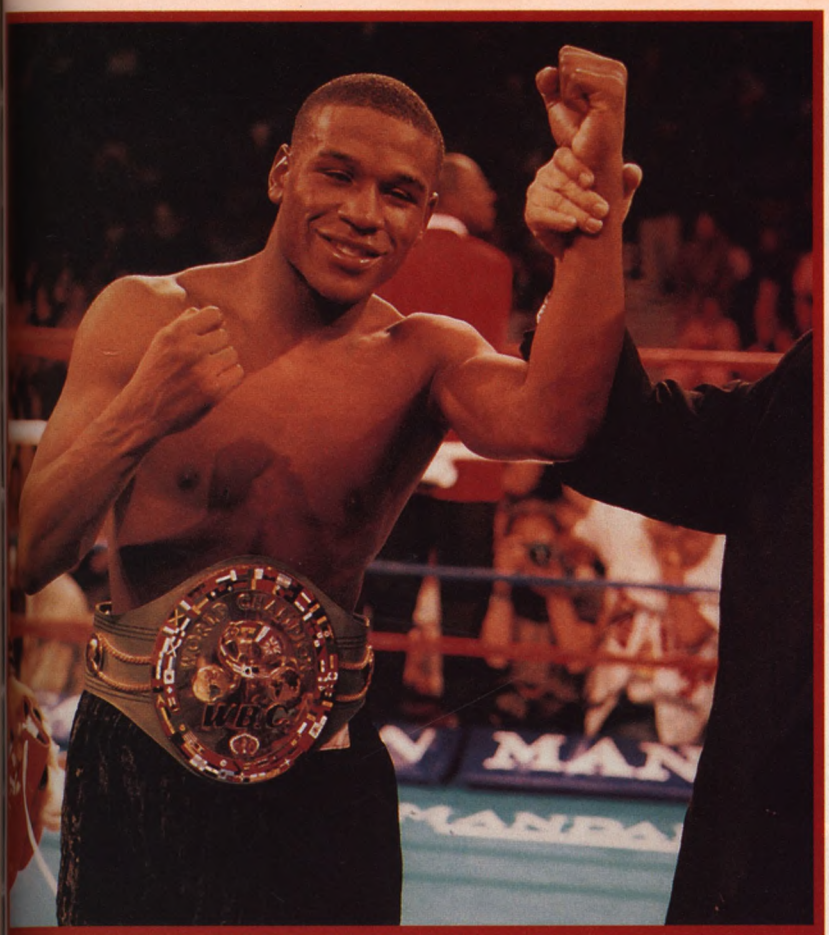
Mayweather finished Juuko, a Ugandan b in Las Vegas, with a series of right hands t head (above) in the ninth. The challenge last-minute replacement for Goyo Vargas, counted out at the 1:20 mark (left).

which all non-heavyweight champions measure their career.

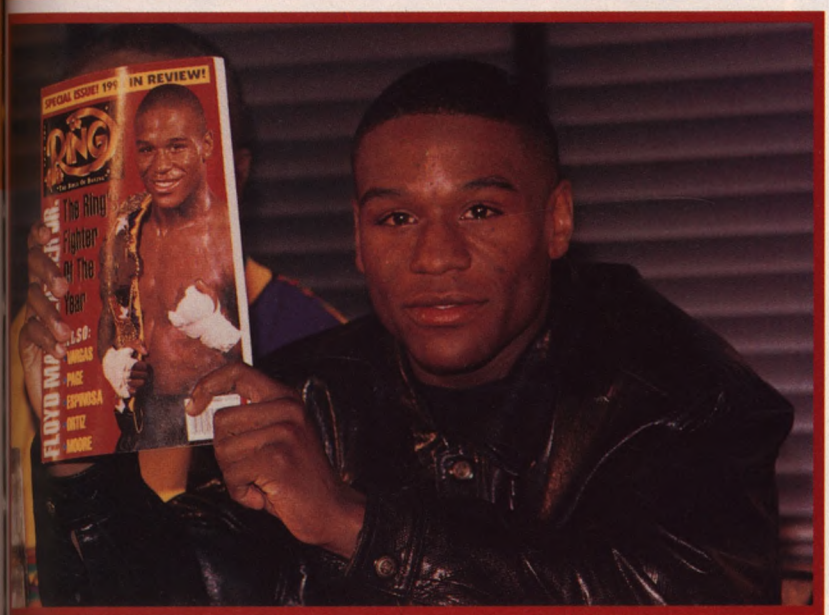
So WBC super featherweight champ Mayweather, who received second billing on the card led by "Golden Boy" De La Hoya's title defense against Oba Carr, was more than a little distracted in his contest against last-minute stand-in Justin Juuko. In fact, until he finally kayoed Juuko with three solid rights in the ninth round, Mayweather was, for the most part, downright boring.

Mayweather, who has a clear case of Oscar Envy, earned $400,000 for the ... ing, less than 10 percent of De La Hoy... purse. Although he believes his sizzli... talent ought to entitle him to millions ea... time out, Mayweather has yet to learn t... the fans don't pay to see talent. They p... to see talent in action.

It's not that the he didn't dominate t... game but overmatched Juuko. The cha... won seven of the eight scored rounds on ... three judges' cards. Pretty Boy's lead ... lashed out swift and accurate as a polis... jab. The punch, which he always seemed ... throw at the right time, was there for h... all night. It has to be one of the trick... right hands in the business. Some fight... tend to cheat when they throw a rig... squaring up so it has less distance to tra... But Mayweather threw his from a perf... stance, with his right shoulder behind ...



The smile and championship belt were still in place after the Juuko victory raised the undefeated Mayweather's record to 21-0 (16). Unfortunately, the bout wasn't exactly a thriller.



What's a guy to do after he's already won the THE RING's Fighter of the Year honors, as Mayweather did in 1998? Spectacular early success against the best fighters in the division has left "Pretty Boy Floyd" without a marquee match at 130 pounds.

left, the way it's supposed to be. And more often than not, the punch got there.

The champion also mixed in lightning lefts to the body that were part uppercut, part hook, and all trouble for Juuko. But both the lefts to the body and rights to the head were usually isolated occurrences. All night long, Mayweather would score,

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Naturally, Mayweather would love to fight Naseem Hamed. But the flamboyant featherweight doesn't seem very interested.

move out, score, move out, slipping just about everything the challenger threw. Whether Juuko went first or tried to counter, Floyd just wouldn't be there.

But the Mayweather who waded in with a brilliant mix of combinations against Chicanito and Manfredy was practically nowhere to be seen this night. In his outing against the lesser Juuko, Mayweather, who improved to 21-0 (16), decided to take few chances, throwing one at a time and often not really committing to the punch. It was like watching a lumberjack swing an ax, then go for a little walk, return, swing again, and so on.

Juuko held a formidable record of 33-2-1 (25) going in, but there wasn't much recognizable talent among his opposition, and in his previous outing he was stopped in the 11th round by Antonio Hernandez.

Mayweather scored just enough in the first round to let Juuko know what he was up against. Experienced fans get used to seeing a feeling-out round, but eventually it dawned on the Las Vegas crowd of 11,528 that the succeeding rounds also looked like feeling-out rounds.

This was the first fight card put on by the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in its impressive new arena. But unimpressed with Mayweather's meticulous style, the fans booed. One of the champion's responses was to crane his neck forward, daring Juuko to take a shot. When's the last time

(Continued on page 74)

FELIX AND OSCAR GO TO WAR!

Who's Going To Prevail In The Welter Shootout

Photo by Jed Jacobsohn/Allsport

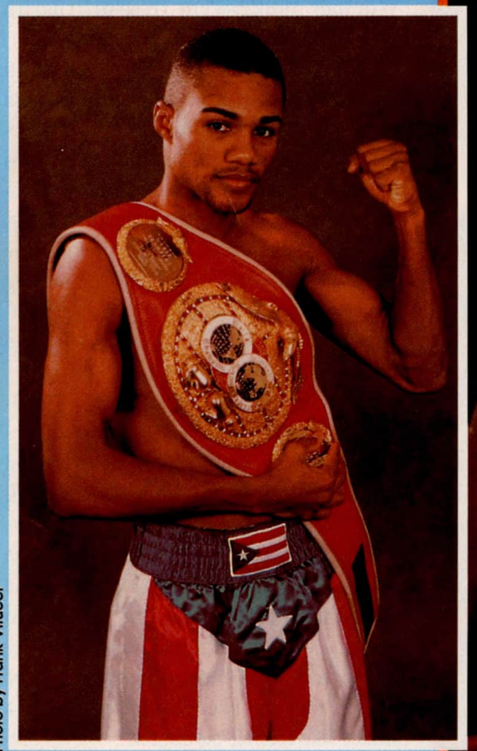


Photo by Frank Vitucci

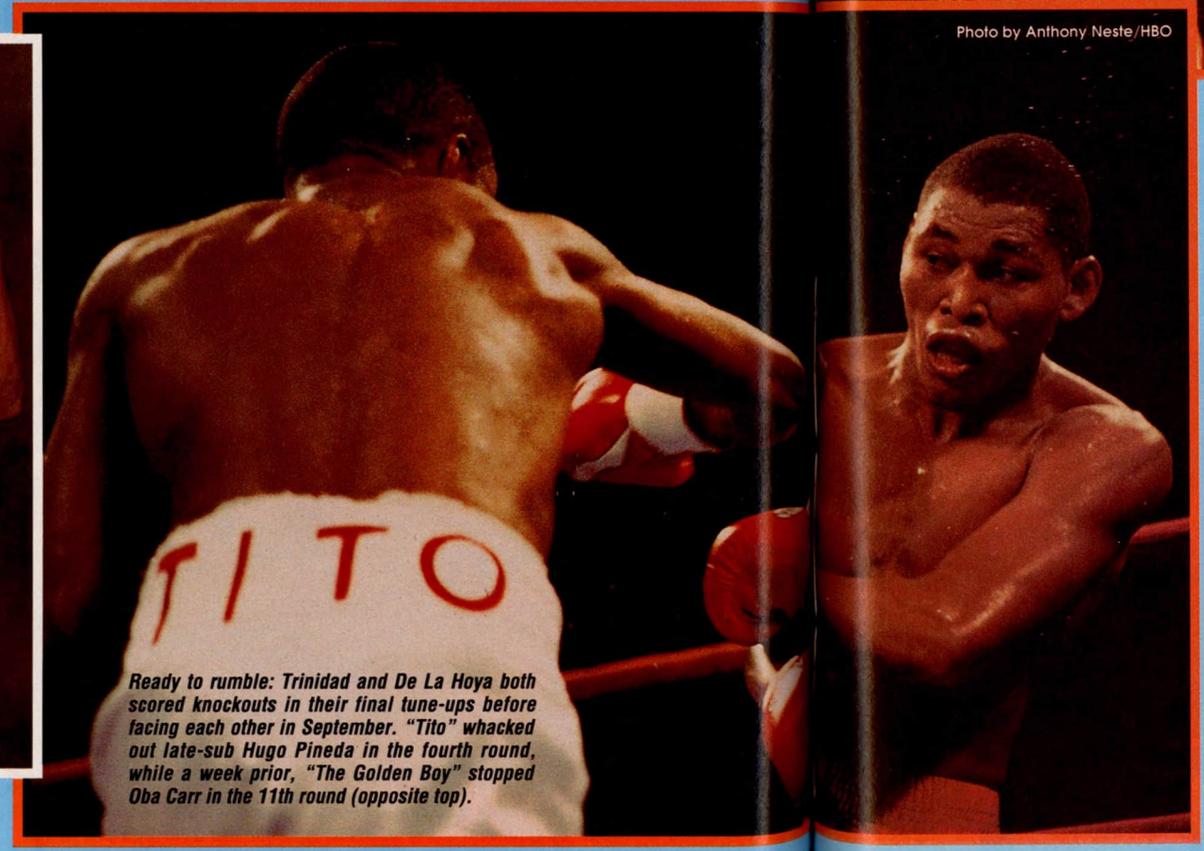


Photo by Anthony Neste/HBO

Ready to rumble: Trinidad and De La Hoya both scored knockouts in their final tune-ups before facing each other in September. "Tito" whacked out late-sub Hugo Pineda in the fourth round, while a week prior, "The Golden Boy" stopped Oba Carr in the 11th round (opposite top).

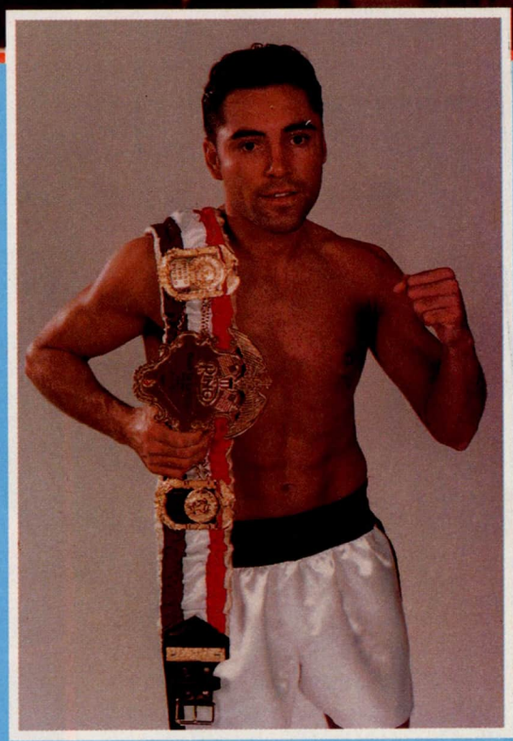


Photo by Frank Vitucci

By Ron Borges

Gil Clancy sat at ringside in the Roberto Clemente Coliseum in San Juan on May 29 shaking his head. He had just watched IBF welterweight champion Felix Trinidad impose his will on a Colombian opponent named Hugo Pineda, knocking him to the floor with a left hook to the stomach that becalmed Pineda, leaving him a crumbled, unmoving mass of flesh. One of Pineda's hands lay on the bottom rope, trying to pull him up, but the rest of his body, as well as his mind, was working against that instinct, and he was counted out at 2:53 of the fourth round.

As Pineda fell, Trinidad rushed across the ring and climbed up on the turnbuckle, his hands thrust to the sky as he faced the crowd. It was a note of utter disdain for his opponent, a fighter Trinidad knew was not getting up. Finally, at the last instant, Trinidad glanced over his shoulder at the fallen Pineda as if to check on his destructive work one last time. One look and he turned back to his followers, safe in the knowledge his fists had just been his best advertisement for himself.

Now all that was left was a fight with Don King over $500,000, and when that was settled, a fight with Oscar De La Hoya for the title of best welterweight in the world. Of this, like most things, Trinidad was sure, but Clancy, who has served as De La Hoya's fight strategist and adviser in recent bouts, knew what he had just seen, too. He had seen a terrific puncher do what he does best, but the Hall of Fame trainer had seen more than that. Not only had he seen a way a man can lose to Felix Trinidad, but also a way a man like Oscar De La Hoya could beat him.

"He's a very good fighter with power in both hands," Clancy said of Trinidad. "He's a very dangerous guy. You have to stop him from coming forward, because when he can just walk in, he's devastating. But he gets hit with the left uppercut, which is one of Oscar's best punches. For one-punch power, I think Oscar is stronger. People have no idea how hard Oscar punches."

They will get a pretty good idea when

THE BIBLE OF BOXING

Photo by Jed Jacobsohn/ Allsport

De La Hoya distorts Carr's face with a powerful left. Although both the WBC champion and Trinidad are potent punchers, many experts believe the winner will be the man who has the strongest chin.

he and Trinidad finally square off at the Mandalay Bay Resort in Las Vegas in the biggest welterweight fight in more than a decade, a fight perhaps as big as Ray Leonard-Thomas Hearns I. It is a fight long in the making and long on argument because for every Trinidad supporter there is a De La Hoya backer. That is what makes for great arguments and, on the best nights, great fights. But this is a fight that never would have happened had De La Hoya not ordered promoter Bob Arum to pay Don King, Trinidad's promoter, the $10.5-million the IBF champion demanded. And it would not have happened had King not relented on the final $500,000, agreeing the day after the Trinidad-Pineda bout to split the purse in a way that would guarantee Trinidad $8.5-million and King $2-million, plus an upside if pay-per-view sales approach 850,000, a record number for a non-heavyweight fight.

Clancy, who had sat in De La Hoya's corner a week before Trinidad destroyed Pineda, believes he knows the key to victory for both fighters. He'd watched his fighter take out a far tougher opponent, Oba Carr, over 11 difficult rounds a week earlier, finally knocking him senseless with a crushing left hook to the face, using a hand that had been sprained and hurting since the second round.

"Whoever has the best chin wins," Clancy said. "It's very simple. They'll both get hit. Who stands up to that wins the fight."

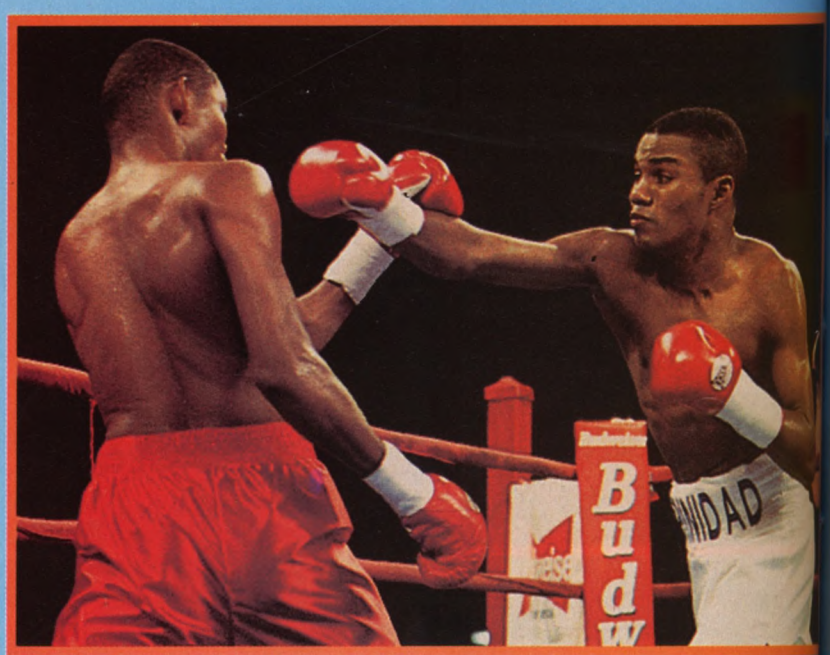
Both fighters have been down, De La Hoya four times, and Trinidad six, but thus far both have gotten up and destroyed the men who offended them. Yet it is that perceived vulnerability, as much as the skill and punching power of both, that gives this fight an aura of unpredictability and danger, two things that sell a boxing match better than anything else. That sense of wonder about the outcome was only enhanced by their last performances, triumphant victories that left the supporters of each convinced of their man's supremacy.

De La Hoya went first, taking on Carr on May 22 in Las Vegas. Carr's only losses had come in title fights with Trinidad and Ike Quartey, and he had dropped them both before losing. So although Carr was a heavy underdog, the issue of the fragility of the WBC champion's chin gave him hope for an upset. But when Carr was rocked by a De La Hoya jab early in the first round and then driven to the floor soon after by a left uppercut, Carr's willingness to trade with a newly more aggressive De La Hoya waned for a time.

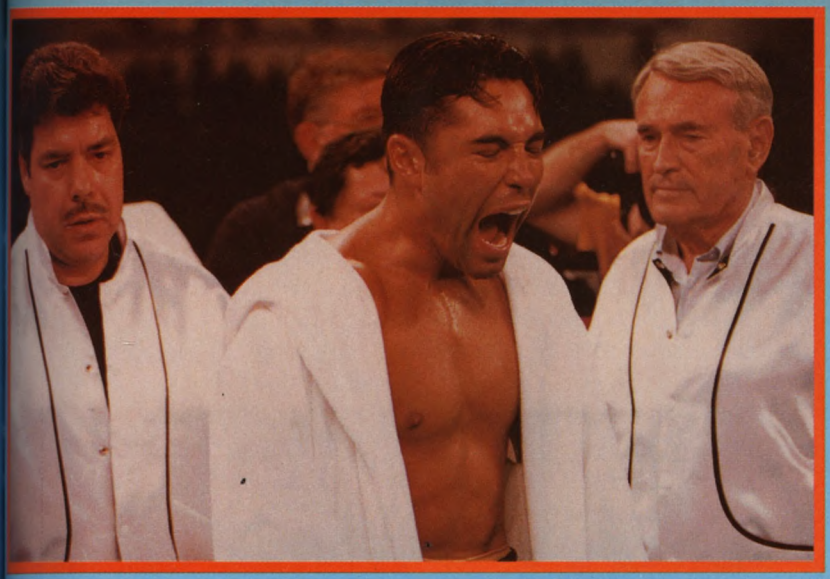
De La Hoya had promised this would happen before the fight, insisting things would be different than they had been in his recent matches with Pernell Whitaker and Quartey, fights he won against difficult opponents, but ones in which he now believes he lost his sense of direction.

"It just hit me," De La Hoya said a few days before the Carr encounter. "What am I doing boxing these guys? I'm not a boxer. I'm a fighter. What am I doing boxing guys like Pernell Whitaker and Ike Quartey? I was not fighting my own style. I should be the leader in that ring, but I was adjusting to them, not them adjusting to me.

"What was I doing talking about losing before the Quartey fight? I decided to listen to myself and be what I want in the ring. This fight you'll see a big difference. I'm going to become more aggressive."



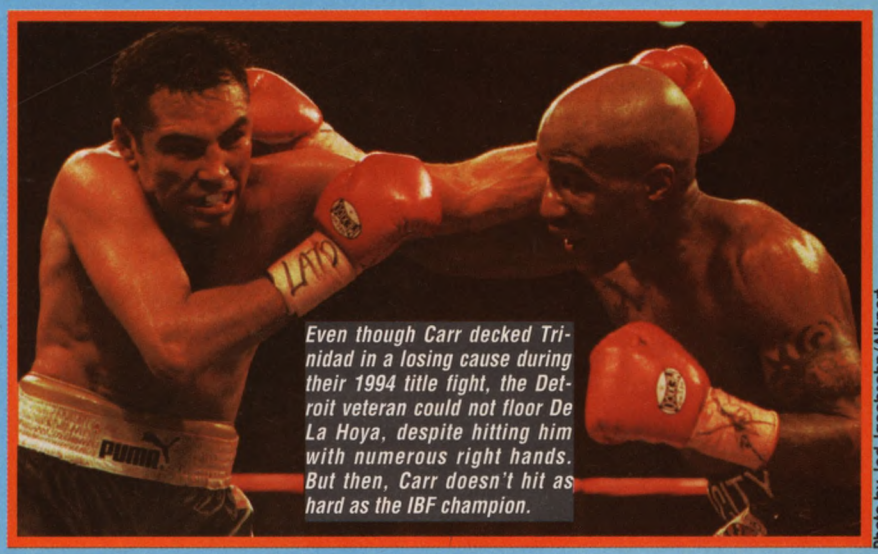
Note Trinidad's perfect form as he throws a right hand at Pineda. The undefeated Puerto Rican generally considered to be a slightly better boxer than the sometimes reckless De La Hoya. Could those skills prove to be the difference in a close fight?



Bill Clancy (right) will be working De La Hoya's corner along with chief trainer Robert Alcazar (left). Clancy thinks Trinidad will be open to the left uppercut, one of De La Hoya's best punches.

De La Hoya's critics have noted his knockout percentage has sunk since he began moving up in weight from his original 130 pounds to 135, then 140, and now 147. Although he has 25 knockouts among his 31 victories, he was taken the distance in four of his last eight fights and had not had a spectacular kayo against a true challenger in several years, unless you disagree with the widely held belief that the Julio Cesar Chavez he stopped twice was an aged and fragile shadow of his former self. Since leaving the lightweight division, De La Hoya has been taken the distance by Whitaker, Quartey, Miguel Angel Gonzalez, and Hector Camacho, and was beginning to feel that the dread opponents once had for him had begun to wane. He blamed this on the parade of trainers he brought in at others' insistence over the past few years, dating back to the importation of a Mexican defensive genius named Jesus Rivero, who improved his defense but blunted his offense. Although Emanuel Steward reversed that and seemed to mesh well with the fighter, he could not survive in the Latino world of advisers who surround De La Hoya, and was soon cut loose in favor of De La Hoya's boyhood trainer, Robert Alcazar, and Clancy.

The chorus of voices around De La Hoya began to change after the Carr fight.



Even though Carr decked Trinidad in a losing cause during their 1994 title fight, the Detroit veteran could not floor De La Hoya, despite hitting him with numerous right hands. But then, Carr doesn't hit as hard as the IBF champion.

Photo by Jed Jacobsohn/Allsport

DE LA HOYA vs. TRINIDAD: STAFF PICKS

•**Nigel Collins:** De La Hoya W 12

"De La Hoya has that something special that only comes along once or twice a generation: the ability to win the big one. He'll have to overcome some scary moments before it's over, but his recent tough fights with Quartey and Carr have seasoned him for this ultimate test, and he'll find a way to persevere."

•**Eric Raskin:** Trinidad W 12

"Trinidad is the smoother boxer, has superior defense, and, most importantly, fights with a little bit more confidence. I think his chin will hold up and he'll outbox De La Hoya comprehensively enough for even the Vegas judges to give him the close nod."

•**Joe Santoliquito:** De La Hoya KO 9

"This fight will define Oscar's career—and he knows it. He has much more to lose than Trinidad, so De La Hoya will want to make an emphatic statement here with Tito as he did against Quartey. De La Hoya is the better athlete, and I feel he has a better chin than Trinidad."

•**Stu Saks:** Trinidad KO 12

"By now, De La Hoya should have settled on a style and perfected it. Trinidad, by contrast, knows exactly what got him to the biggest fight of his career. He'll pick De La Hoya's defense apart methodically and then pour it on in the last minute, forcing a stoppage."

•**William Dettloff:** De La Hoya KO 8

"The difference here is in the whiskers, and Trinidad will not hold up all night under Oscar's hook."

•**Jeff Ryan:** De La Hoya KO 9

"The Golden Boy hasn't yet delivered a performance for the ages, but he finally will on September 18. Don't be surprised if both men go down. Do be surprised is De La Hoya's slightly better chin, superior all-around game, and edge in superfight experience doesn't lead to Trinidad's downfall."

Photo by Anthony Neste/HBO

Although Trinidad receives rabid support from his Puerto Rican fans, he still failed to fill the Roberto Clemente Coliseum for the Pineda fight. That's one reason he couldn't get purse parity.

He jettisoned a large part of his entourage as well as adviser Mike Hernandez, the godfather of the East L.A. barrio where De La Hoya grew up. Rumors even swirled that Clancy would be dropped, but De La Hoya himself later said that would not happen. Regardless, reducing his staff payroll was of less concern to young De La Hoya than regaining the sense of intimidation opponents once carried into the ring with them when they went to face him.

"I was losing total respect in the ring, the respect I had four years ago," De La Hoya said. "I lost respect every single fight the last three, four years. I used to walk through my opponents. My last few fights people tried to make me a boxer, but that's not my style. I'm not a boxer; I'm a slugger. I'm going back to what got me here."

What got Oscar De La Hoya three world titles in three weight classes and a date with Felix Trinidad worth millions was aggression, and that's what he showed against Carr, dropping him in the first round and rocking him several more times as the fight progressed. Yet he never pressed those advantages in the terrible way Trinidad did with Pineda.

"He convinced himself what he would do, and he did it in the first round," Clancy said of De La Hoya. "Then he stopped. It becomes a chess match with him instead of a fight when all he has to do is fight because his hand speed is so much faster [than his opponents], and he punches so hard he can get you out at any time.

"Every single round he opened up against Quartey, he won the round. You need a psychiatrist to figure out why [he doesn't always do that]. When I had Emile Griffith, I was happy when he got hit with a good shot early in a round. Then he'd go kill the guy. Who knows why?"

It is Clancy's belief that if De La Hoya approaches Trinidad throughout their fight the way he did the first and last rounds of the Carr bout, the outcome will be clear and quick because, just like De La Hoya beat Trinidad to the negotiating table to sign a contract, he will also beat him to the punch.

"Felix is a bomber, so the idea is to hit him before he hits you," Clancy said. "He's not a puzzle. Oba Carr was really a fighter without a weakness. There's nothing you can take advantage of, but most fighters do have something you can exploit. Trinidad is very dangerous, but he's a little slower than Oscar."

De La Hoya's seeming reluctance to attack Carr as he said he would bother Clancy because that dragged him back into the waiting game he had played with Whitaker and Quartey at times, and allowed Carr to grow bolder as the fight progressed. Eventually, it caused the champion an unexpected problem when Carr butted him in the seventh round, slicing open his left cheek. Thereafter, De La Hoya went more on the offensive until he finally took Carr out, as Trinidad had also done. But the one difference between De La Hoya and Trinidad's fights with Carr that was significant to Clancy was that Carr had dropped Trinidad, while De La Hoya had been unmoved by similar flurry shots.

There are two ways to look at that and

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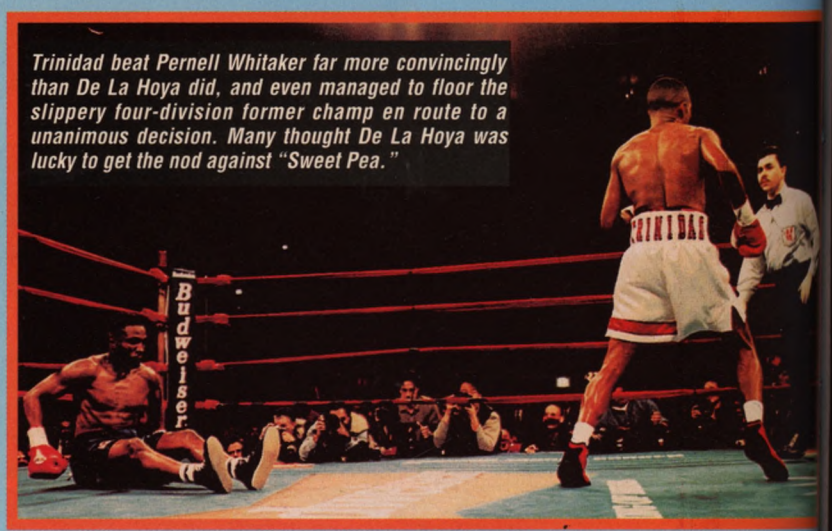
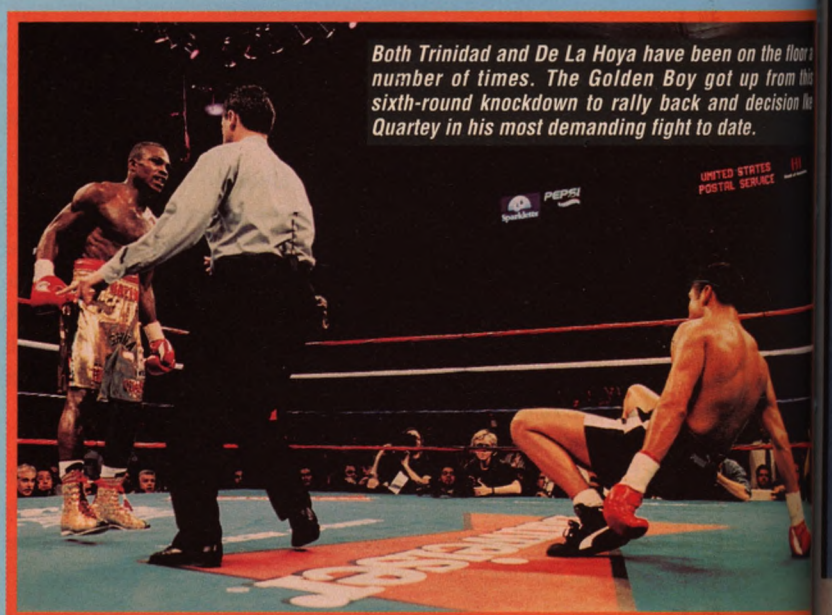


Trinidad beat Pernell Whitaker far more convincingly than De La Hoya did, and even managed to floor the slippery four-division former champ en route to a unanimous decision. Many thought De La Hoya was lucky to get the nod against "Sweet Pea."



Both Trinidad and De La Hoya have been on the floor a number of times. The Golden Boy got up from this sixth-round knockdown to rally back and decision Ike Quartey in his most demanding fight to date.

SPECIAL SECTION

THE 20 GREATEST FIGHTERS OF THE 20TH CENTURY

By William Dettloff

Over the course of the last 100 years, tens of thousands of prize fighters have climbed into rings all over the world and risked humiliation, injury, and worse in harried pursuits of greatness. No true pug of appreciable merit tugs a pair of gloves over his fists at his first contest, looks out over the ropes at a canyon of strangers and at his demon in the opposite corner, and believes in his heart that he could accept mediocrity. He may come to accept its presence over time, indeed, may even welcome it and allow it to comfort him. But in the beginning, just the possibility of greatness is what drags him out into the cold to run as the rest of the universe sleeps, and what convinces him to punch when he'd be happy just to be able to breathe. But greatness is reserved for few men and even fewer prize fighters. Out of the thousands and thousands who began and ended their stays in the ring with the soundest intentions, only the sturdiest and truest found greatness at the end of the road. Those that did are ring immortals, and the pages that follow are a celebration of those who achieved greatness beyond all others over the last 100 years. They are The Fighters of the Century.

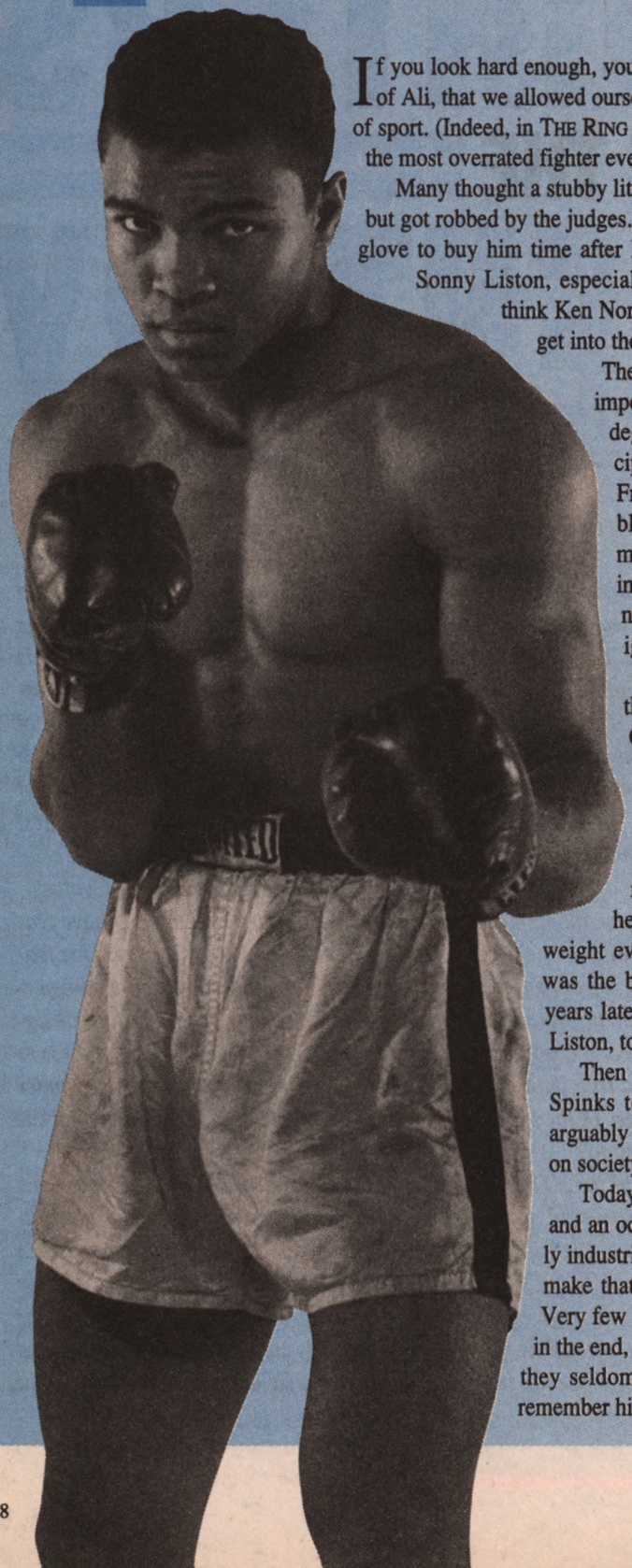
You'll note, we're sure, that this is not our first endeavor along these lines; recent past issues of THE RING have featured analyses of the 50 Greatest Heavyweights Ever as well as the 50 Greatest Fighters of the Past 50 years. This feature is distinct from both in that its rankings are derived less from a pound-for-pound or who-could've-beaten-whom perspective, though both are accorded some weight; but given an equal measure of importance is the fighter's historical significance and impact not only on the game but on the time and era in which he lived and fought.

It is for this reason, for example, that Jack Johnson, a true pioneer, was rated below such heavyweights as Evander Holyfield, Larry Holmes, Rocky Marciano, and Joe Frazier in the 50 Greatest Heavyweights feature, but in this analysis is placed at number five overall, right behind Henry Armstrong.

Finally, in the interest of brevity, we limited our field to the 20 best and most important fighters the century has seen and rated each accordingly. As with any such endeavor, some did not make the cut and it pained us to exclude such outstanding champions as Marvelous Marvin Hagler, Alexis Arguello, Emile Griffith, Barney Ross, Carlos Monzon, Ruben Olivares, Kid Chocolate, and Eder Jofre. Also missing are Tony Canzoneri, Sam Langford, Salvador Sanchez, Mickey Walker, and the original Joe Walcott. At the same time, we strove to avoid fighters whose popularity exceeded their accomplishments, like Rocky Graziano and Jake LaMotta, as well as those whose seemingly stellar careers were plagued by allegations of impropriety, like Abe Attell. Don't fret for those not included. We think the fighters, dead and alive, will understand that even greatness comes in degrees.

1 MUHAMMAD ALI

56-5 (37); heavyweight champion 1964-'67, '74-'77, '78



If you look hard enough, you can still find people who maintain that we've all made too much of Ali, that we allowed ourselves to be taken in by the most convincing con man in the history of sport. (Indeed, in THE RING readers' poll, June 1999, 17 percent of the respondents named Ali the most overrated fighter ever.) The case can be made.

Many thought a stubby little light heavyweight named Doug Jones beat him outright in '63 but got robbed by the judges. We all know now about Angelo Dundee enlarging a hole in Ali's glove to buy him time after Henry Cooper knocked him loopy, and both of Ali's wins over Sonny Liston, especially the second, ended under questionable circumstances. Most think Ken Norton beat him fair and square two out of three, and we won't even get into the horrid decision Ali was handed over Jimmy Young in '76.

There are also those who question the validity of Ali's standing as an important social and cultural symbol. There is evidence that to some degree he was more a tool of the Nation of Islam than a staunch disciple of its teachings early on, and to this day George Foreman, Joe Frazier, and a few others insist that the rhetoric Ali used to rally black America to his side had more to do with ticket sales and mean-spirited self-promotion than any sincere, high-minded social intentions. So if you're looking for reasons to question Ali's greatness, they're out there. But to deny it completely, you'd have to ignore all that he accomplished.

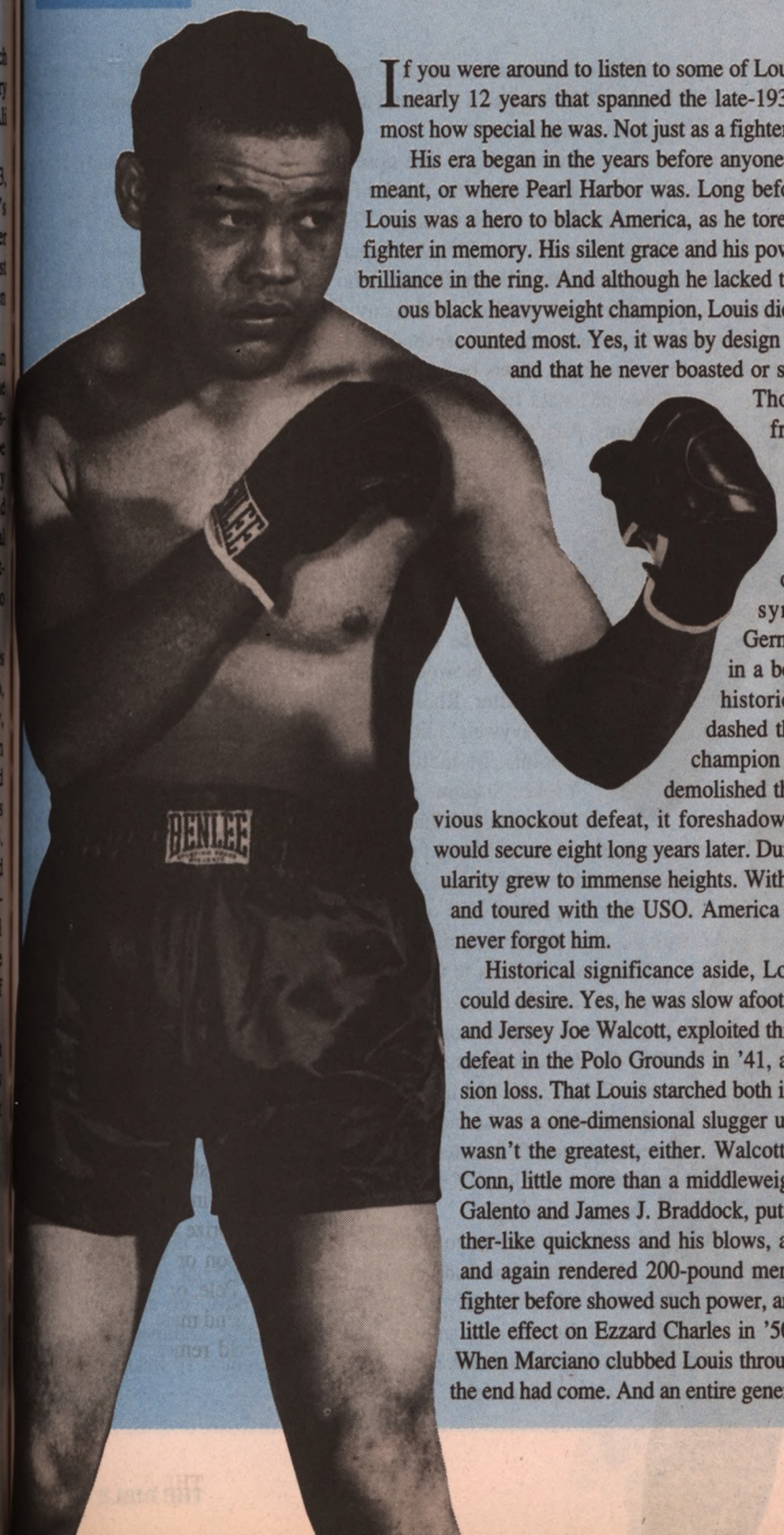
There wasn't a relevant heavyweight from the '60s and '70s that Ali didn't whip: Liston, Floyd Patterson, George Chuvalo, Cleveland Williams, Ernie Terrell, Zora Folley, Jerry Quarry, Oscar Bonavena, Jimmy Ellis, Buster Mathis, Joe Bugner, Ron Lyle, Earnie Shavers. And, of course, Frazier, Foreman, and Norton. He defended the title nine times before his license was revoked in April '67 for refusing to be inducted into the U.S. military, and three years later he returned–older, slower, and heavier, no longer the fastest and most athletically gifted heavyweight ever, but a brighter star nonetheless. His war with Frazier in '71 was the biggest and most important fight in nearly 30 years, and three years later, at 32, he deflated Foreman, an even more frightful version of Liston, to regain the crown.

Then came "The Thrilla In Manila," and after that his spanking of Leon Spinks to win the title an unprecedented third time. By then he was arguably the most well-known athlete in history, and in terms of his impact on society and modern culture, the most important fighter ever.

Today, Ali, with nothing more than a slow shuffle, hushed whispers and an occasional magic trick, can draw crowds in virtually any moderately industrialized nation on the planet. No other prize fighter in history could make that claim. Not Joe Louis or Jack Johnson or Sugar Ray Robinson. Very few athletes could; maybe Babe Ruth or Pele, or Michael Jordan. And in the end, it doesn't matter if a man and his legend match perfectly in detail; they seldom do. What matters is how the world remembers him. And we remember him as The Greatest.

2 JOE LOUIS

68-3 (54); heavyweight champion 1937-'48



If you were around to listen to some of Louis' record 25 title defenses on the radio over the nearly 12 years that spanned the late-1930s to well into the '40s, you know better than most how special he was. Not just as a fighter, but as a national figure and icon.

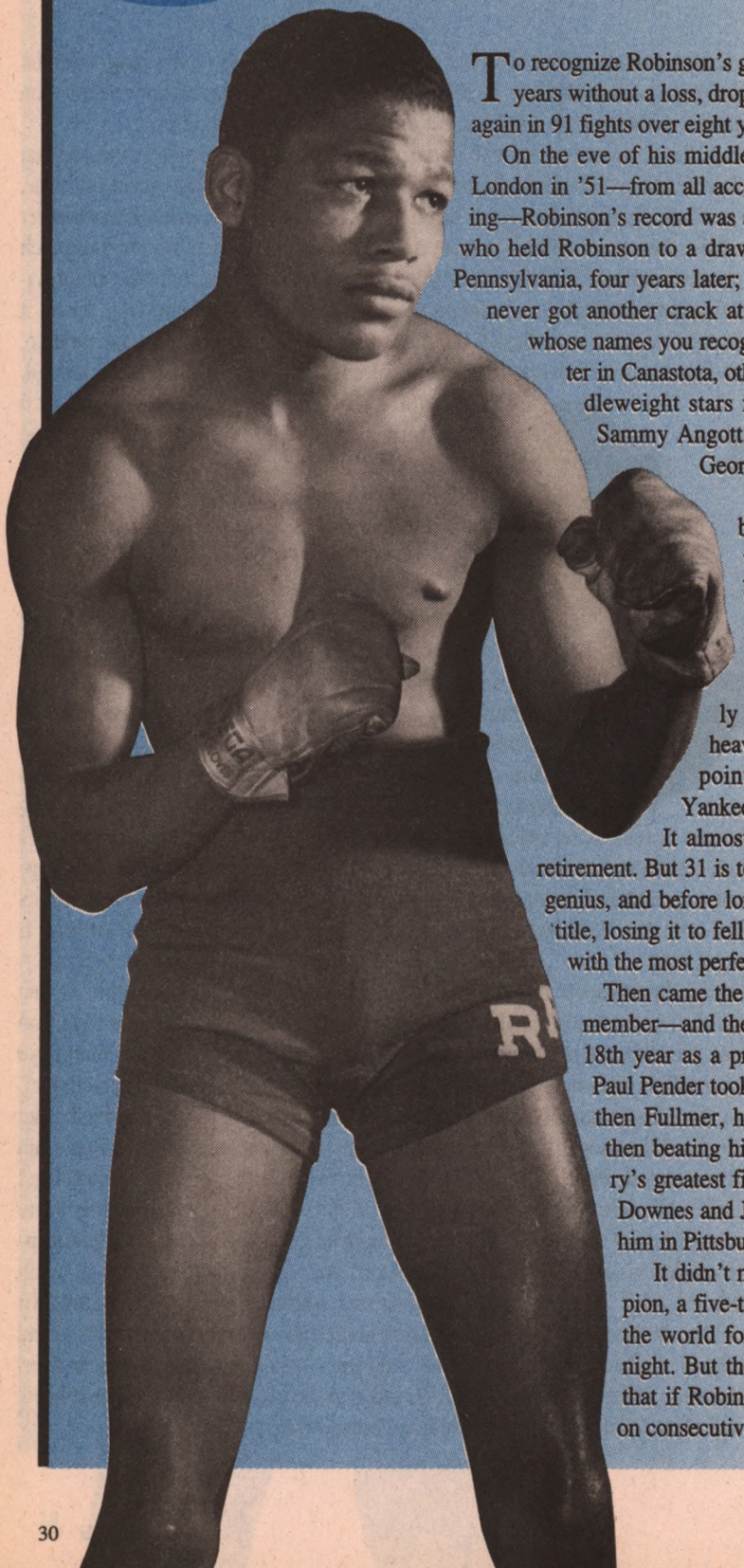
His era began in the years before anyone in the western world knew what the word Nazi meant, or where Pearl Harbor was. Long before tensions in Europe drew the world into war, Louis was a hero to black America, as he tore through the heavyweight division like no other fighter in memory. His silent grace and his power could not be denied, nor could one fake such brilliance in the ring. And although he lacked the flamboyance of say, Jack Johnson, the previous black heavyweight champion, Louis did all the talking he needed to in the ring, where it counted most. Yes, it was by design that he wasn't photographed with white women, and that he never boasted or spoke ill of anyone when the press were around. Those who guided his fortunes had learned well from Johnson's indiscretions, and by the time Hitler began his murderous trek across Europe, Louis was as popular in New Orleans, Chicago, and Kalamazoo as he was in Harlem.

In 1938, when America, and indeed, much of the world, was on the precipice of war, Louis symbolized what was right and good, and Germany's Max Schmeling, like it or not, was Hitler in a boxing ring. Their clash at Yankee Stadium was, historically, the most important fight since Johnson dashed the hopes of white America by thrashing former champion Jim Jeffries 28 years earlier. And when Louis demolished the German in less than a round, avenging a previous knockout defeat, it foreshadowed the ultimate victory America and its allies would secure eight long years later. During the war, Louis joined the Army and his popularity grew to immense heights. With the title frozen, he fought countless exhibitions and toured with the USO. America never saw him out of uniform, and for that, it never forgot him.

Historical significance aside, Louis was as flawless a fighting machine as one could desire. Yes, he was slow afoot, and especially agile fighters, such as Billy Conn and Jersey Joe Walcott, exploited this foible; Conn in his celebrated 13th-round kayo defeat in the Polo Grounds in '41, and Walcott seven years later in a disputed decision loss. That Louis starched both in subsequent rematches disproves the theory that he was a one-dimensional slugger unable to adapt when the need arose. Louis' chin wasn't the greatest, either. Walcott floored him twice in the aforementioned loss, Conn, little more than a middleweight, wobbled him, and other pugs, such as Tony Galento and James J. Braddock, put him on the mat. But his hands moved with panther-like quickness and his blows, always short, precise, and perfectly timed, again and again rendered 200-pound men unconscious within an instant of landing. No fighter before showed such power, and maybe none since, either. But those blows had little effect on Ezzard Charles in '50 and even less on Rocky Marciano a year later. When Marciano clubbed Louis through the ropes in the eighth round, everyone knew the end had come. And an entire generation mourned its arrival.

3 SUGAR RAY ROBINSON

175-19-6 (109), 2 no-contests; welterweight champion 1946-'5 middleweight champion 1951, '51-'52, '55-'57, '57, '58-'60



To recognize Robinson's genius, one only has to know that he went 40 fights and three years without a loss, dropped a 10-round decision to Jake LaMotta, and wouldn't lose again in 91 fights over eight years.

On the eve of his middleweight title upset loss to awkward Brit Randy Turpin in London in '51—from all accounts the result of too much partying and not enough training—Robinson's record was an astounding 129-1-2 (83) with 1 no-contest. (Jose Basora, who held Robinson to a draw in '45, was summarily laid out in a round in Scranton, Pennsylvania, four years later; Henry Brimm, who drew with Robinson in Buffalo in '42, never got another crack at him.) And many of those victories came over opposition whose names you recognize—several because they appear on the Hall of Fame roster in Canastota, others because they fought all the other welterweight and middleweight stars from the same era: LaMotta, Fritzie Zivic, Marty Servo, Sammy Angott, Henry Armstrong (albeit a faded version), Tommy Bell, Georgie Abrams, Kid Gavilan, Bobo Olson.

If it had all ended there, or even after Robinson stormed back to topple Turpin in the rematch in New York, Robinson would have ended his career as a sure Hall of Famer, the best welterweight champion ever, and a legitimate legend. But he wasn't done. Not even close.

The legend would not have been complete without the '52 blowouts of Olson and Rocky Graziano, and immediately after, Robinson's unsuccessful run at Joey Maxim's light heavyweight title when, outweighed by 15 pounds and ahead on points, he melted in the oppressive heat on a June night in Yankee Stadium and suffered the only stoppage loss in his career.

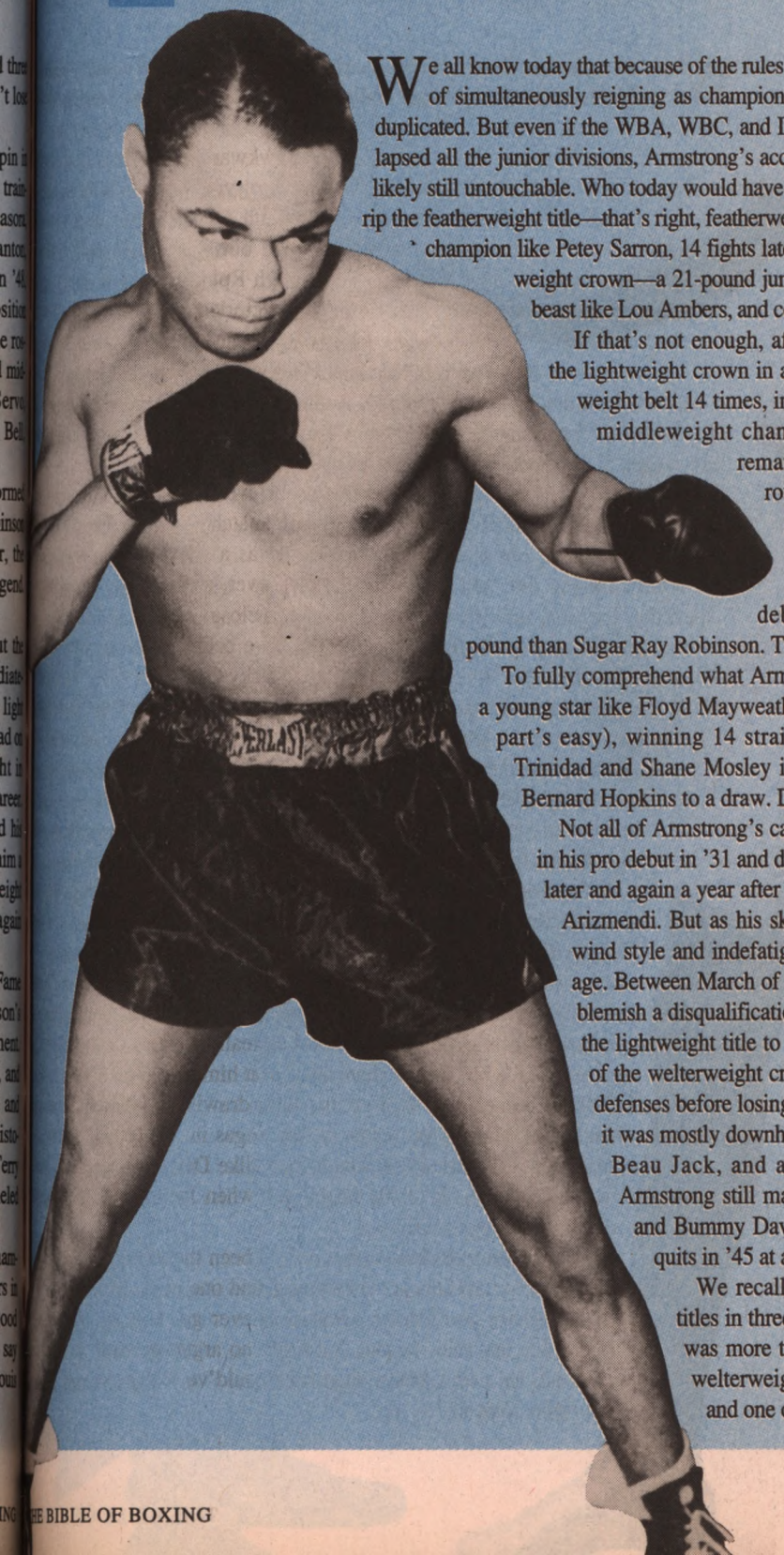
It almost ended there, when Robinson was 31 and announced his retirement. But 31 is too young for a genius to stop doing that which makes him a genius, and before long he was back, again stopping Olson for the middleweight title, losing it to fellow Hall of Famer Gene Fullmer, and winning it back again with the most perfect one-punch knockout in the history of prize fighting.

Then came the loss to Carmen Basilio—that's right, another Hall of Fame member—and the subsequent victory in their second meeting, in Robinson's 18th year as a professional fighter. That was really his last great moment. Paul Pender took the crown two years later, beat him again in the return, and then Fullmer, his old nemesis, took his turn, drawing with Robinson and then beating him soundly on points in Las Vegas in '61. After that, history's greatest fighter started to losing to guys like Denny Moyer and Terry Downes and Joey Giardello. He finally quit when Joey Archer pummeled him in Pittsburgh.

It didn't matter to Robinson that he had been the welterweight champion, a five-time middleweight champion, and one of the best fighters in the world for nearly 15 years. Geniuses never go easy into that good night. But they go anyway, and you'll get no argument here if you say that if Robinson were a heavyweight, he could've licked Ali and Louis on consecutive nights.

4 HENRY ARMSTRONG

151-21-9 (101); featherweight champion 1937-'38, lightweight champion 1938-'39, welterweight champion 1938-'40



We all know today that because of the rules that govern modern-day boxing, Armstrong's feat of simultaneously reigning as champion over three separate weight classes can never be duplicated. But even if the WBA, WBC, and IBF suddenly merged, threw the rule out, and collapsed all the junior divisions, Armstrong's accomplishment would still be remarkable, and very likely still untouchable. Who today would have the courage, not to mention the skill and talent, to rip the featherweight title—that's right, featherweight, 126 pounds—from a crafty but overmatched champion like Petey Sarron, 14 fights later beat Hall of Famer Barney Ross for the welterweight crown—a 21-pound jump—and three months after that go to war with a beast like Lou Ambers, and come away with the lightweight world title?

If that's not enough, after relinquishing the featherweight title, losing the lightweight crown in a rematch to Ambers, and defending the welterweight belt 14 times, in 1940 Armstrong came within a hair of beating middleweight champion Ceferino Garcia over 10 rounds in a rematch to a bout Armstrong won clearly over 15 rounds in New York two years earlier. (Note: The draw was met with derision by most, but in retrospect, it's probably better that Armstrong didn't get the nod. If he had we'd still be debating if he was a better fighter pound-for-pound than Sugar Ray Robinson. This way, each has his place in history.)

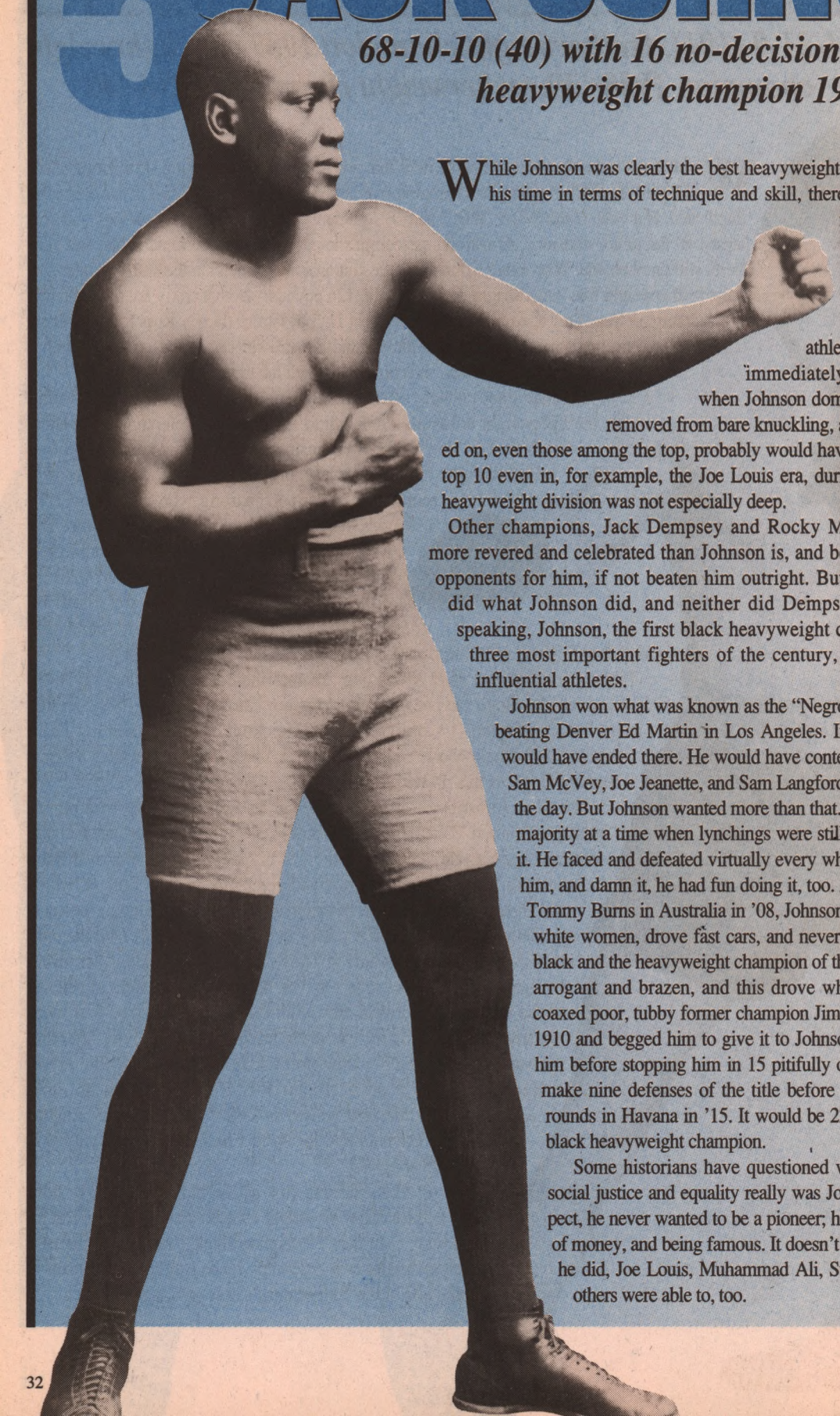
To fully comprehend what Armstrong accomplished, try to envision, say, even a young star like Floyd Mayweather knocking out Naseem Hamed (okay, so that part's easy), winning 14 straight, 13 by knockout, then decisioning Felix Trinidad and Shane Mosley in back-to-back fights, and a year later holding Bernard Hopkins to a draw. Doesn't sound very plausible, does it?

Not all of Armstrong's career was stellar. He was stopped in three rounds in his pro debut in '31 and dropped two of his next three. He lost again a year later and again a year after that, in the first of his four bouts with rival Baby Arizmendi. But as his skills grew and complemented his tireless, whirlwind style and indefatigable determination, so did his winning percentage. Between March of '36 and May of '39, he went 57-1, with the only blemish a disqualification loss to Tony Chavez in St. Louis. After losing the lightweight title to Ambers in '39, he won eight straight in defense of the welterweight crown, drew with Garcia, and managed four more defenses before losing the title to the infamous Fritzie Zivic. After that it was mostly downhill—losses to Zivic in a return, and Willie Joyce, Beau Jack, and a prime Sugar Ray Robinson—but an aged Armstrong still managed wins over Lew Jenkins, Sammy Angott, and Bummy Davis before losing to Chester Slider and calling it quits in '45 at age 33.

We recall Armstrong first as the only man ever to hold titles in three different weight classes simultaneously. But he was more than that. "Homicide Hank" was one of the best welterweights ever—perhaps second only to Robinson—and one of the 20th century's best prize fighters.

5 JACK JOHNSON

68-10-10 (40) with 16 no-decisions, 1 no-contest; heavyweight champion 1908-'15



While Johnson was clearly the best heavyweight of his era and decades ahead of his time in terms of technique and skill, there are other heavyweights of the modern era—probably many—who in all likelihood would have beaten him handily. Larry Holmes and George Foreman for example, two big, athletic, modern heavyweights, come immediately to mind. In the early-1900s, when Johnson dominated, the game wasn't that far removed from bare knuckling, and the crude fare Johnson feasted on, even those among the top, probably would have been hard pressed to crack the top 10 even in, for example, the Joe Louis era, during which the talent pool in the heavyweight division was not especially deep.

Other champions, Jack Dempsey and Rocky Marciano among them, are far more revered and celebrated than Johnson is, and both would have proven worthy opponents for him, if not beaten him outright. But neither Holmes nor Foreman did what Johnson did, and neither did Dempsey or Marciano. Historically speaking, Johnson, the first black heavyweight champion, is among the two or three most important fighters of the century, and certainly one of its most influential athletes.

Johnson won what was known as the "Negro Heavyweight Title" in 1903 by beating Denver Ed Martin in Los Angeles. If white America had its way, it would have ended there. He would have contented himself with toiling against Sam McVey, Joe Jeanette, and Sam Langford, all great black heavyweights of the day. But Johnson wanted more than that. And if that meant infuriating the majority at a time when lynchings were still fairly commonplace, then so be it. He faced and defeated virtually every white fighter brave enough to meet him, and damn it, he had fun doing it, too. After his coronation against Irish Tommy Burns in Australia in '08, Johnson married and fooled around with white women, drove fast cars, and never even once apologized for being black and the heavyweight champion of the world. To the contrary, he was arrogant and brazen, and this drove white America so batty that they coaxed poor, tubby former champion Jim Jeffries off of his alfalfa farm in 1910 and begged him to give it to Johnson but good. Johnson toyed with him before stopping him in 15 pitifully one-sided rounds and went on to make nine defenses of the title before Jess Willard stopped him in 26 rounds in Havana in '15. It would be 22 years before there was another black heavyweight champion.

Some historians have questioned whether advancing the cause of social justice and equality really was Johnson's intent. Maybe, they suspect, he never wanted to be a pioneer; he just liked fighting, making a lot of money, and being famous. It doesn't matter. He did both, and because he did, Joe Louis, Muhammad Ali, Sugar Ray Robinson, and a lot of others were able to, too.

6 JACK DEMPSEY

60-6-8 (50) with 6 no-decisions; heavyweight champion 1919-'26

When one compiles a list of the great figures in fighting history, Dempsey must be included. And not just because he was one of the toughest and fiercest sluggers ever; indeed, as a fighter he had his flaws, and slick boxers, most notably "Fat Willie" Meehan, who beat him twice, and Gene Tunney, who took the title from him, exploited them (although admittedly, Dempsey was past his prime when he fell to the younger, faster Tunney). He wasn't the most active champion either. He made just five defenses during his reign, and his manager, the inimitable Jack Kearns, steadfastly steered him away from the good black heavyweights of the day. But Dempsey dominated heavyweight boxing during the game's truest golden age, The Roaring '20s, and for a stretch he and Babe Ruth were the icons of the time. That he was able to shed the draft dodger label he was unfairly laden with in the days immediately following World War I and quickly become the biggest draw in the game, and in all of sport, is a testament to his charisma.

They couldn't get enough of "The Manassa Mauler." He and Tommy Gibbons bankrupted the small town of Shelby, Montana, and his annihilation of light heavyweight king Georges Carpentier in '21 was boxing's first million-dollar gate. The first match with Tunney drew 120,757 to Sesquicentennial Stadium in Philadelphia; the second another 105,000 to Soldiers Field in Chicago. He was the undisputed star in a period that spawned such legends as Harry Greb and Mickey Walker, and when an old, tired Dempsey caught an unprotected Jack Sharkey with a left hook and knocked him cold to earn the return with Tunney, America rejoiced.

Dempsey's ravaging of the towering Jess Willard to annex the crown in 1919 is still spoken of in hushed tones, and his wild, '23 brawl with Argentine strongman Luis Firpo—during which Dempsey was knocked from the ring and required the friendly assistance of the fighting press to help him beat the count—is to this day revered as one of the greatest heavyweight title fights ever.

You can't read any credible work regarding the ring's greatest moments without coming upon some mention of the "Long Count" affair with Tunney, and that no one even mentions that Tunney floored Dempsey to open the very next round speaks to America's love for and fascination with the former hobo who learned to fight on railroad cars and hobo jungles. In the 70 years since his last fight, which was the return with Tunney, Dempsey's standing among the great heavyweights has dropped only slightly—quite a considerable feat in view of some of those who followed him: Louis, Marciano, Ali, Liston, Foreman, Holmes. Dempsey stood just under 6'1" and never approached 200 pounds in his fighting days, but in any way you care to measure, he is one of the biggest fighters ever.

7 BENNY LEONARD

85-5-1 (69) with 121 no-decisions; lightweight champion 1917-'25

Reviewing the careers of fighters who plied their trade several generations ago can be tricky business. One can pore over records endlessly and analyze the fighters they defeated in the hope that such an analysis will reveal how they compared to other great fighters of their time and how they might have done against fighters of subsequent eras, too. What one concludes at the end will also be determined largely by the recorded accounts of those who saw them fight and were alive to experience their effect on the masses and, perhaps most importantly, how their legends and legacies stand up to the passage of time. It is no secret that when ranking the all-time greats, fight aficionados almost always favor fighters from their own era. So what does it tell you that nearly 68 years after his last fight—and 52 years after he collapsed and died in New York's St. Nicholas arena while refereeing a bout—Leonard is still widely regarded as one of the two or three greatest lightweights ever?

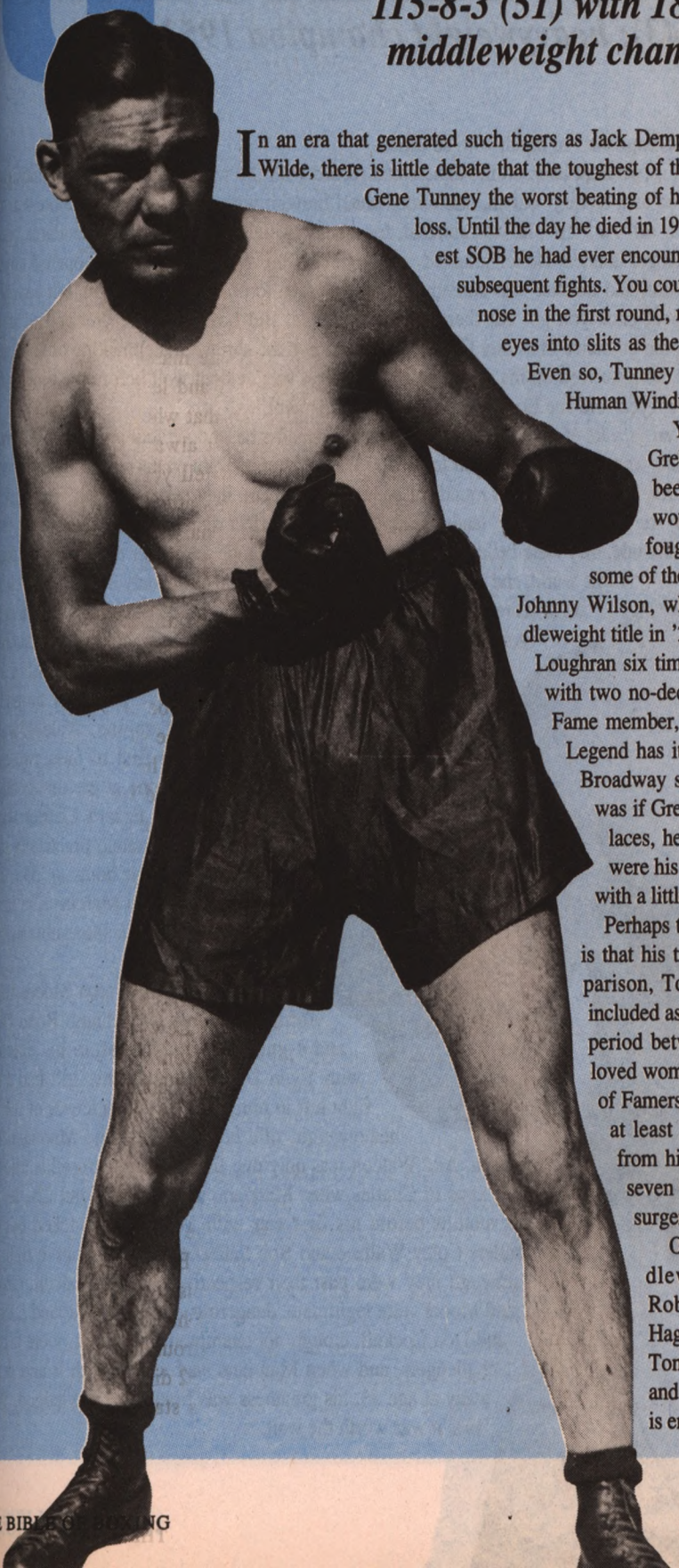
It didn't look that way early on. Like Henry Armstrong and a couple other Hall of Famers, Leonard was knocked out in his pro debut in 1911. The following year, he was stopped in consecutive bouts by Joe Shugrue and Frankie Fleming. But he eventually honed the skills that would mark him as the greatest defensive fighter of his era, and before long was boxing rings around the best 135-pound fighters in the world: Johnny Kilbane, Richie Mitchell, Rocky Kansas, Johnny Dundee, Joe Mandot. When he met the talented Freddie Welsh for the title in New York—it was their third meeting—he stopped him easily in nine. Leonard was 21 years old.

The record books show that Leonard held the title for eight long years, but defended it only five times—a misleading statistic, since he fought 81 times over the same period, many times against welterweights. Among the vanquished were such notables as Lew Tendler (twice), Jack Britton, Joe Welling, Pal Moran, and Johnny Nelson. And while other fighters, such as Dempsey, were drawing the color line, Leonard was turning back talented black lightweights like Leo Johnson and Eddie Dorsey.

Leonard's career did have its bad spots, even before an ill-fated comeback that was spawned by the stock market crash in '29. While trying to lift Britton's welterweight crown in '22, he dominated throughout and floored his rival in the 13th round. Midway through the referee's count, Leonard inexplicably dashed across the ring and struck Britton again, drawing an immediate disqualification. Leonard would later insist that he simply lost his composure, but for years rumors circulated that he had bet against himself. In any event, neither that indiscretion nor the disastrous comeback that ended with a brutal knockout loss to Jimmy McLarnin in '32 diminished him one iota. And now, more than half a century later, Leonard's standing, and his legend, remain intact.

8 HARRY GREB

115-8-3 (51) with 183 no-decisions; middleweight champion 1923-'26



In an era that generated such tigers as Jack Dempsey, Benny Leonard, Mickey Walker, and Jimmy Wilde, there is little debate that the toughest of them all was Greb. You know by now that he gave Gene Tunney the worst beating of his 77-bout career, not to mention the only official loss. Until the day he died in 1978, Tunney called Greb the meanest, toughest, dirtiest SOB he had ever encountered, and that was after beating him five times in subsequent fights. You couldn't blame him. The memory of Greb breaking his nose in the first round, ripping a gash over his left eye, and hammering his eyes into slits as the fight progressed must have been hard to forgive. Even so, Tunney was head pall bearer at Greb's funeral after "The Human Windmill" died following nasal surgery in '26 at age 32.

You probably also know by now that shortly after Greb's death, his physician revealed that the fighter had been blind in his right eye for over five years. That would be extraordinary even if you didn't know that he fought 90-plus times over the same period. And that some of the fighters he met included Tunney, Billy Shade, and Johnny Wilson, whom he ravaged over 15 rounds to win the middleweight title in '23. Greb tangled with future Hall of Famer Tommy Loughran six times, winning twice, losing once, and drawing once, with two no-decisions, and in '25 bested Walker, another Hall of Fame member, over 15 exciting, foul-filled rounds in New York. Legend has it that the two went at it again later that night in a Broadway speakeasy where both were regulars. Unconfirmed was if Greb took the opportunity to get in some more elbows, laces, headbutts, and low blows. Most would tell you they were his first, second, third, and fourth favorite punches, and with a little prompting he'd demonstrate. Free of charge.

Perhaps the most puzzling aspect of Greb's legendary career is that his training habits were downright laughable. By comparison, Tony Galento, whose prefight diet is said to have included as much beer as he could down in the one-minute rest period between rounds while sparring, was a Spartan. Greb loved women and liquor as much as he did beating up on Hall of Famers, and by all accounts, he was none the worse for it, at least until slick southpaw Tiger Flowers took the title from him in February '26 and then turned the trick again seven months later. It was then that Greb elected to have surgery, and never awoke after going under.

Over the century, there have been many middleweights more skilled than Greb: Sugar Ray Robinson, Marcel Cerdan, Carlos Monzon, Marvin Hagler. Several were more powerful: Stanley Ketchel, Tony Zale, Rocky Graziano. But none were tougher, and that includes Jake LaMotta. And sometimes, tough is enough.

9 ROCKY MARCIANO

49-0 (43); heavyweight champion 1952-'56

It may be said of Marciano that no one ever accomplished so much with so little.

While it seems impossible to fathom now, as we look back on his undefeated record with the wisdom gained from hindsight, the early days of his career, Marciano was viewed as a clumsy, oafish, one-dimensional brawler with all the talent and potential of egg timer. And that widely held view was not far off. At 5'10", he was smallish for a heavyweight, even by 1950s standards, and two left feet often got tangled. He telegraphed virtually every blow he threw, his skin opened up at slightest insult, and defense was something that was nice to practice in the gym, but complete impractical once you got out there under the lights. But boy, could he crack. And slowly under the guidance of trainer Charley Goldman and the shrewd matchmaking of manager Weill, he improved on his shortcomings, and that was evident well before the time he blasted out a 37-year-old Joe Louis in 1951 to earn a title shot.

Even so, a lot of people weren't convinced, even after he stopped four straight in '52, and doubters were sitting pretty when Jersey Joe Walcott dumped him on his rear in the first round their title bout. But after 12 rounds of controlled mayhem, they began to question themselves and by the time "The Rock" landed perhaps the most perfect right cross in history in the 13th claim the title, they were believers. Six title defenses and four years later there wasn't a doubt in the world, and now, 46 years later, we recall him as the only heavyweight champ on to retire undefeated. Considering all that went before him, and all that has gone since, the significance of that achievement cannot be overstated.

Still, in some quarters there remain minor doubts as Marciano's greatness, and they revolve primarily around the level of competition he faced as champion. Walcott was when he gave Marciano hell in the first of their two meetings—in the second he fell like a stone at the first contact—and former champion Ezzard Charles was when he fought Marciano practically to death in both of their bouts in '54. Archie Moore was 38 when Marciano, in his last bout, hammered him into submission nine rounds.

But this was right after Moore kayoed former middleweight champ Bobo Olson and a good three years before his epic bout with Yvon Durelle. Old Archie still had a little fight left in him, and the five defenses of the light heavyweight title he made after the Marciano fight proves it. And Walcott was only one fight removed from his title-winning kayo of Charles when Marciano stopped him, and Charles, six months before his first war with Marciano, knocked out contenders Coley Wallace and Bob Satterfield in consecutive fights. Although they were past their respective primes, Walcott, Charles and Moore were legitimate, dangerous opponents. Roland LaStarza and Don Cockell, though not championship timber, were credible challengers, and when Marciano said to hell with it and walked away at age 33, his greatness was finally acknowledged. We're sure it was worth the wait.

10 ARCHIE MOORE

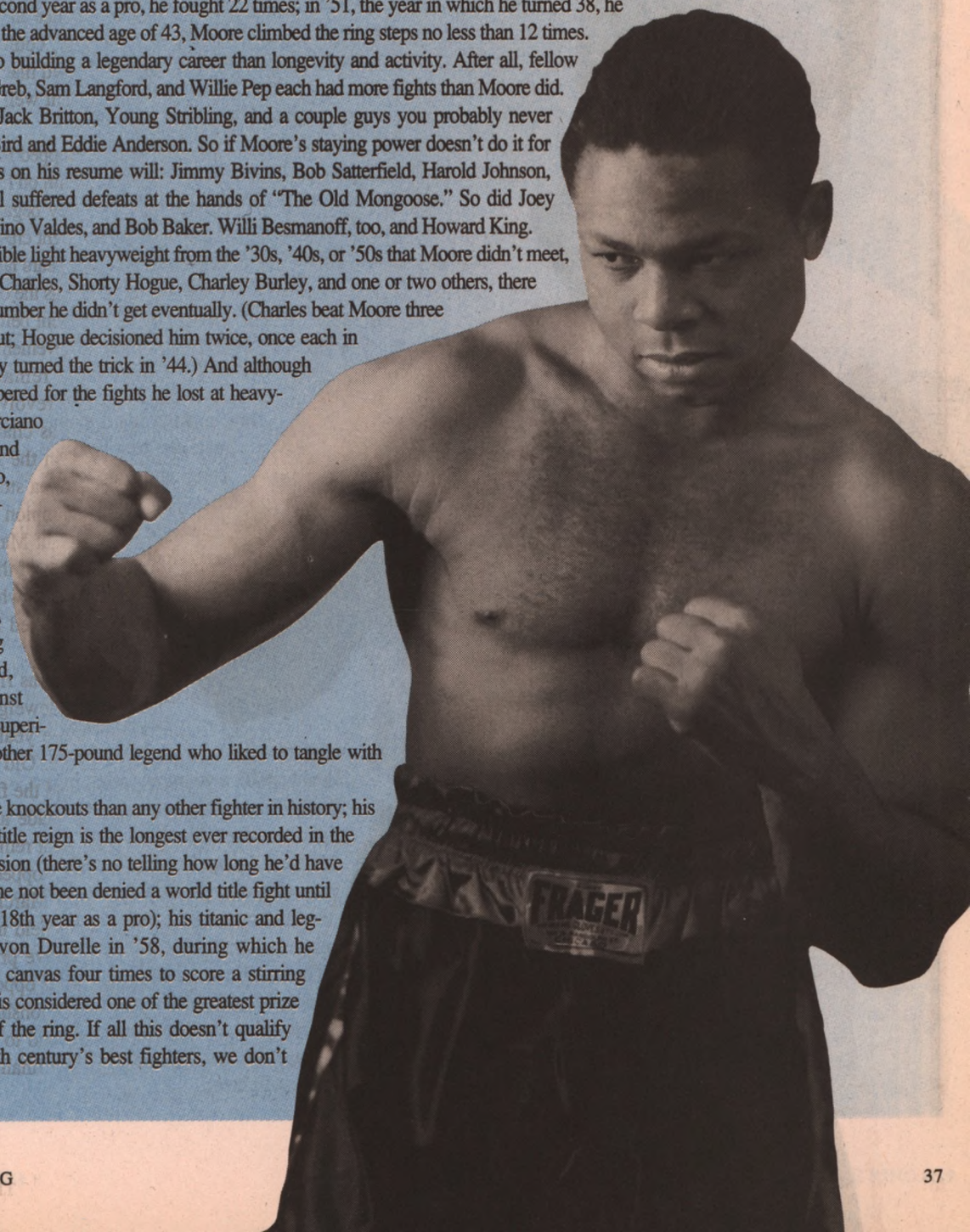
183-24-10 (141) with 1 no-contest; light heavyweight champion 1952-'62

Moore must be included on any compilation of all-time greats almost solely by virtue of his astonishing longevity. He began his professional career with a second-round stoppage of Piano Man Jones in 1935, and ended it with a third-round kayo of Mike DiBiase in Phoenix in '63, 28 years later. His tenure as one of the world's great fighters spanned four decades, three wars, and seven Presidents, and he didn't take off 10 years in the middle either, the way George Foreman, his sometimes protege, did. Nor was this feat abetted by consistent inactivity; Moore was an exceptionally active fighter throughout his career, and the frequency with which he fought dropped proportionally, but not drastically, as he grew older: In his second year as a pro, he fought 22 times; in '51, the year in which he turned 38, he had 18 fights; in '56, at the advanced age of 43, Moore climbed the ring steps no less than 12 times.

But there is more to building a legendary career than longevity and activity. After all, fellow Hall of Famers Harry Greb, Sam Langford, and Willie Pep each had more fights than Moore did. So did Len Wickwar, Jack Britton, Young Stribling, and a couple guys you probably never heard of named Billy Bird and Eddie Anderson. So if Moore's staying power doesn't do it for you, perhaps the names on his resume will: Jimmy Bivins, Bob Satterfield, Harold Johnson, and Clarence Henry all suffered defeats at the hands of "The Old Mongoose." So did Joey Maxim, Bobo Olson, Nino Valdes, and Bob Baker. Willi Besmanoff, too, and Howard King.

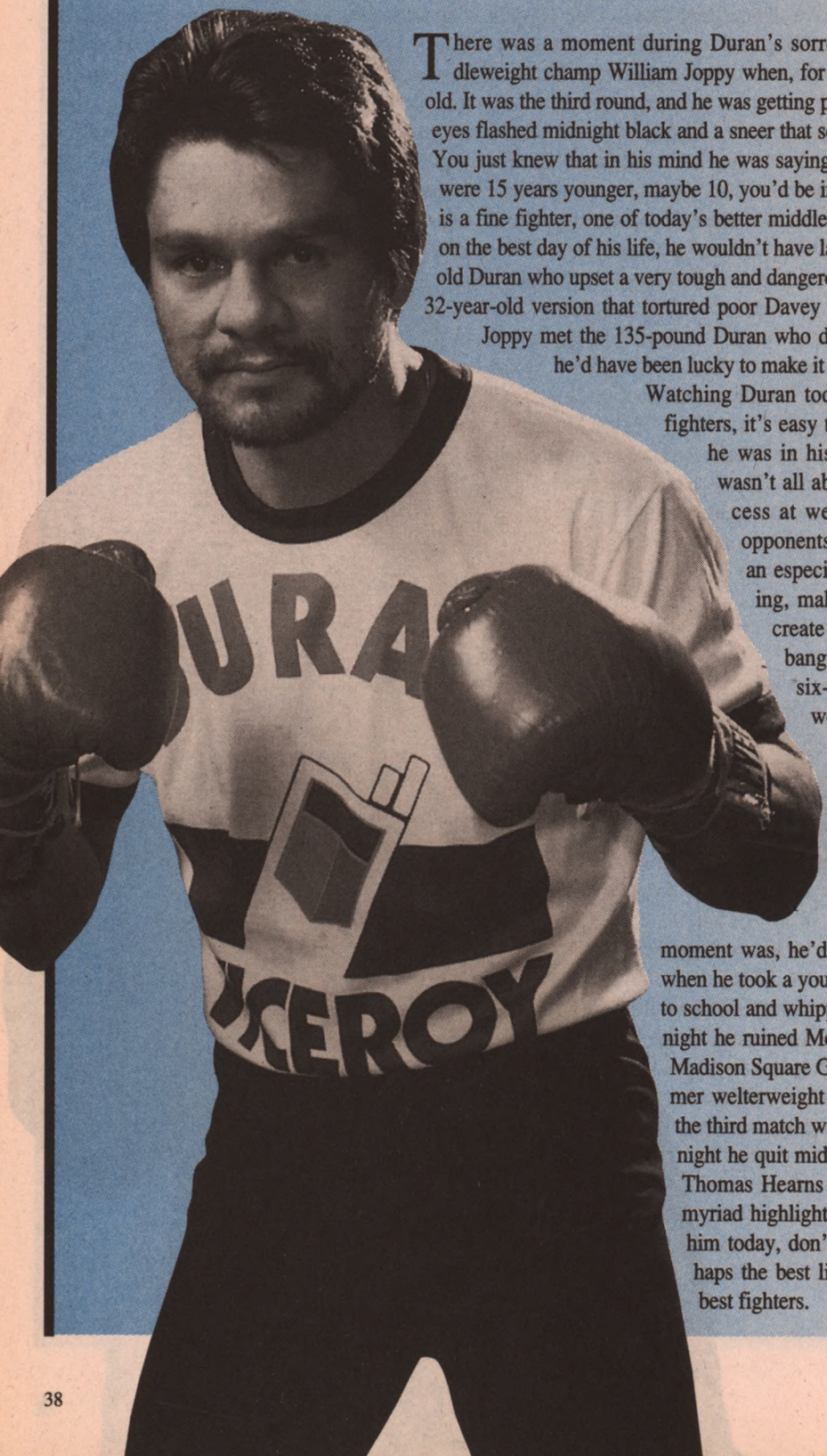
There wasn't a credible light heavyweight from the '30s, '40s, or '50s that Moore didn't meet, and aside from Ezzard Charles, Shorty Hogue, Charley Burley, and one or two others, there weren't many whose number he didn't get eventually. (Charles beat Moore three times, once by knockout; Hogue decisioned him twice, once each in '39 and '41; and Burley turned the trick in '44.) And although Moore is often remembered for the fights he lost at heavyweight—to Rocky Marciano and Floyd Patterson, and to Muhammad Ali, too, when Moore was 45—he slapped around nearly as many heavyweights as light heavies, Satterfield, Valdes, and Besmanoff among them. (For the record, Moore's success against heavyweights was far superior to Bob Foster's, another 175-pound legend who liked to tangle with the big boys.)

Moore scored more knockouts than any other fighter in history; his nine-year, one-month title reign is the longest ever recorded in the light heavyweight division (there's no telling how long he'd have been a champion had he not been denied a world title fight until he was 36 and in his 18th year as a pro); his titanic and legendary battle with Yvon Durelle in '58, during which he willed himself off the canvas four times to score a stirring 11th-round knockout, is considered one of the greatest prize fights in the history of the ring. If all this doesn't qualify him as one of the 20th century's best fighters, we don't know what would.



11 ROBERTO DURAN

102-15 (70); lightweight champion 1972-'78, WBC welterweight champion 1980, WBA junior middleweight champion 1983, WBC middleweight champion 1989



There was a moment during Duran's sorrowful August 1998 challenge of WBA mi dleweight champ William Joppy when, for a split second, Duran looked like the Duran old. It was the third round, and he was getting pummeled and battered along the ropes when h eyes flashed midnight black and a sneer that screamed contempt and disdain covered his fac You just knew that in his mind he was saying to Joppy, "You are nothing. I spit on you. I were 15 years younger, maybe 10, you'd be in the morgue already." And he was right. Jopp is a fine fighter, one of today's better middleweights, and from all accounts, a nice guy. B on the best day of his life, he wouldn't have lasted into the late rounds with even the 38-yea old Duran who upset a very tough and dangerous Iran Barkley in '89, or past the fifth with th 32-year-old version that tortured poor Davey Moore in '83. And if a lightweight version Joppy met the 135-pound Duran who decimated an entire division over 20 years ag he'd have been lucky to make it out of the ring under his own power.

Watching Duran today, nearly 50 years old, struggle with clu fighters, it's easy to forget what a magnificent fighting machi he was in his prime. And contrary to popular opinion, wasn't all about power, and that was proved with his su cess at welterweight and beyond, where most of h opponents were bigger and stronger than he. Duran wa an especially gifted technician, adept at counterpunch ing, making his opponents miss, and using angles t create the best possible openings. But yes, he cou bang, and the victims he left in his wake over h six-year reign of terror as the world's best ligh weight can attest to it. He stopped 11 of 12 tit challengers after ravaging Ken Buchanan fo the crown in '72.

By the time he took apart one-time con queror Esteban DeJesus in their '78 rubbe match, he was quite probably the best fighte the world had seen in a decade or more.

If you asked Duran today what his greates moment was, he'd probably recall the night in '80 in Montrea when he took a younger, faster, bigger fighter named Ray Leonar to school and whipped him over 15 rounds. Or he might name th night he ruined Moore in front of 20,000 maniacal supporters a Madison Square Garden. It might even be when he destroyed fo mer welterweight icon Pipino Cuevas in four rounds in '83, o the third match with DeJesus. It's a safe bet he wouldn't pick th night he quit mid-round against Leonard in their return or whe Thomas Hearns nearly decapitated him in '84. But there ar myriad highlights from which to choose, and when you wat him today, don't feel sorry for him. Remember Duran as pe haps the best lightweight ever and one of the 20th century best fighters.

12 WILLIE PEP

230-11-1 (65); featherweight champion 1942-'48, '49-'50

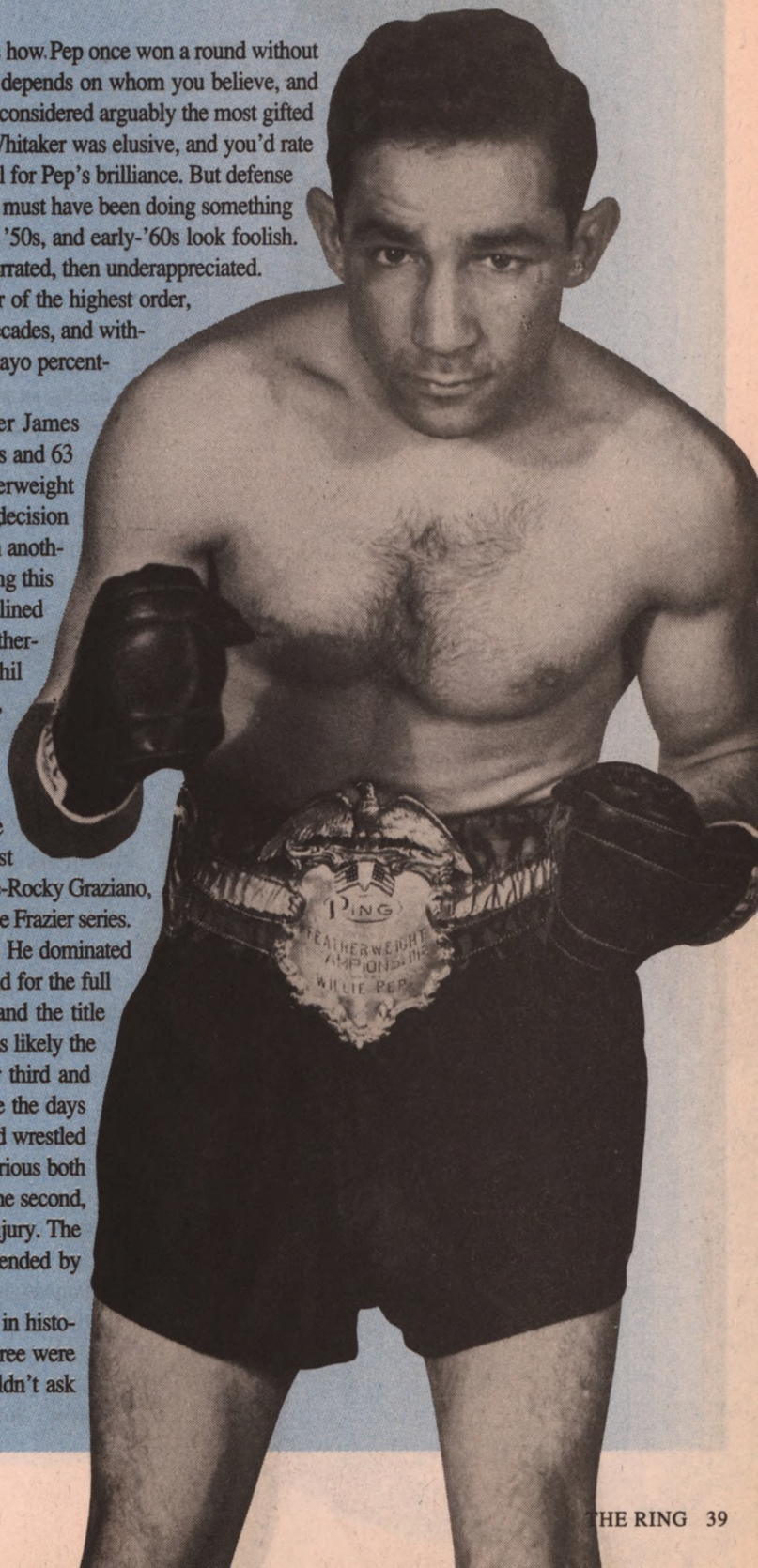
One of the fight game's most enduring fables involves how Pep once won a round without throwing a punch. Whether or not it's actually true depends on whom you believe, and it's not important anyway. What is important is that he is considered arguably the most gifted defensive boxer in history. If you think a prime Pernell Whitaker was elusive, and you'd rate his ability to slip punches a 10, square it and you get a feel for Pep's brilliance. But defense alone doesn't win fights, and Pep won 230 of them, so he must have been doing something in between making the best featherweights of the 1940s, '50s, and early-'60s look foolish. And that's where "The Will O' The Wisp" is, if not underrated, then underappreciated. He wasn't just a defensive genius; he was a master boxer of the highest order, and that he was able to sustain his brilliance over three decades, and without any appreciable punching power—look again at his kayo percentage—is one of the game's more remarkable feats.

Pep turned pro in '40, winning a four-rounder over James McGovern in Hartford, Connecticut, and went three years and 63 fights without a loss, along the way claiming the featherweight world title from Chalky Wright. He dropped a non-title decision to Sammy Angott in '43 in New York, then embarked on another winning streak that went 73 fights and five years. During this stretch, he was injured in a plane crash that kept him sidelined for six months, but he still scored wins over the best featherweights the world had to offer: Wright, Sal Bartolo, Phil Terranova, Willie Roach, Jackie Wilson, and Jock Leslie, to name a few.

The streak came to an end in '49 when he and murderous punching Sandy Saddler engaged in the first fight of their hard-fought and notoriously dirty four-bout series. The Pep-Saddler feud is recalled as one of the game's most intense rivalries and compares favorably with the Tony Zale-Rocky Graziano, Sugar Ray Robinson-Jake LaMotta, and Muhammad Ali-Joe Frazier series.

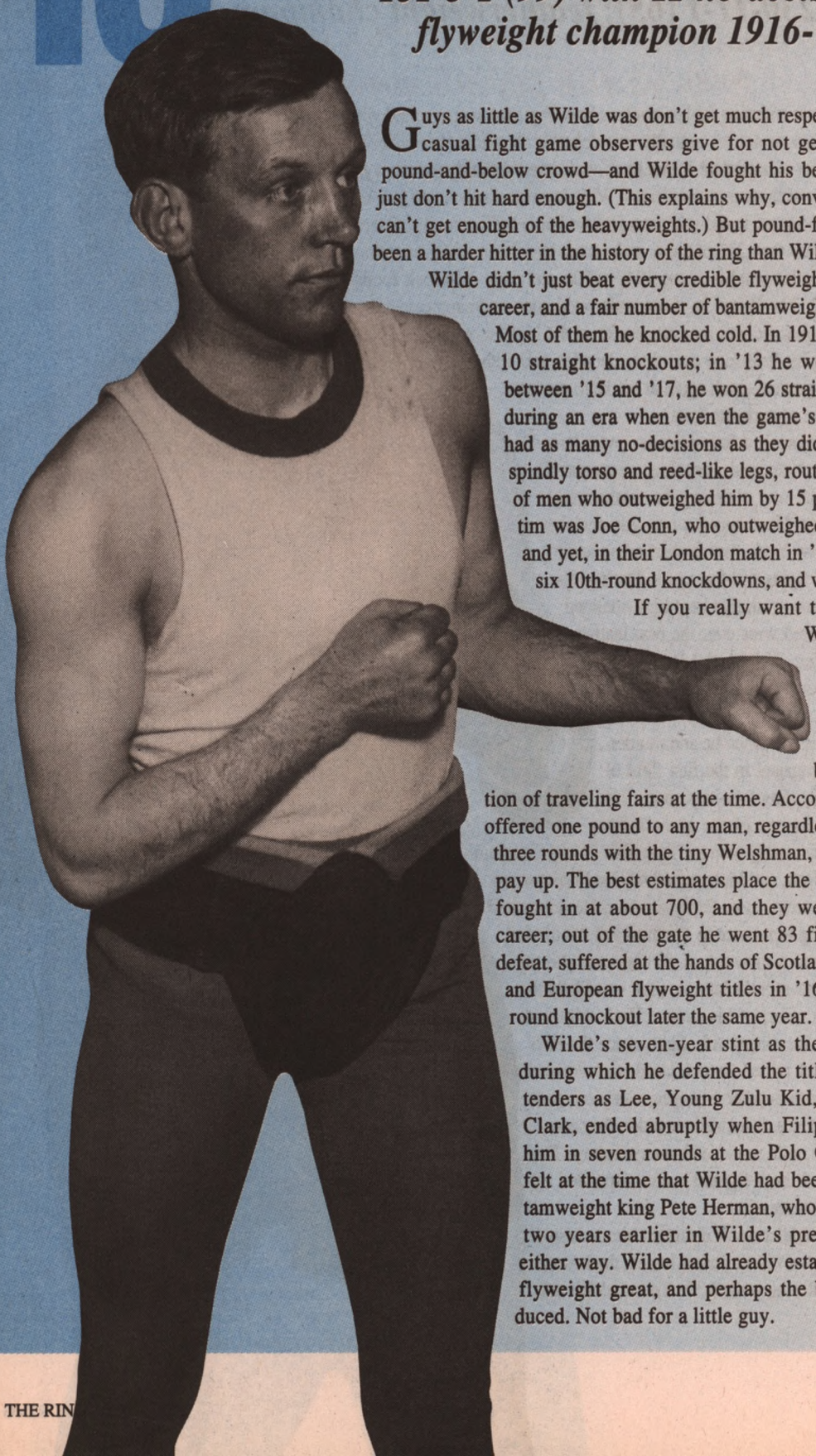
Ultimately, Saddler would prove to be Pep's superior. He dominated him in their first match, flooring him twice in the third and for the full count a round later. Pep gained a measure of revenge and the title when he decisioned Saddler four months later in what was likely the most brilliant and courageous effort of his career. Their third and fourth meetings were perhaps the dirtiest title fights since the days of Ad Wolgast. The two pushed, pulled, butted, laced, and wrestled one another all over the ring with Saddler emerging victorious both times; the first when Pep suffered a dislocated shoulder, the second, in '51, when Pep quit after the ninth round with an eye injury. The latter bout was so foul-plagued, both fighters were suspended by the New York State Athletic Commission.

But Pep's problems with Saddler don't diminish him in history's eye. The fact remains that of his 11 career losses, three were to Saddler and seven came after he turned 30. You couldn't ask for a better legend.



13 JIMMY WILDE

131-3-1 (99) with 11 no-decisions; flyweight champion 1916-'23



Guys as little as Wilde was don't get much respect. The most common answer casual fight game observers give for not getting excited about the 126-pound-and-below crowd—and Wilde fought his best at about 104—is that they just don't hit hard enough. (This explains why, conversely, the uninitiated masses can't get enough of the heavyweights.) But pound-for pound, there may not have been a harder hitter in the history of the ring than Wilde, and his record proves it.

Wilde didn't just beat every credible flyweight in the world over a 13-year career, and a fair number of bantamweights and featherweights as well. Most of them he knocked cold. In 1911, "The Mighty Atom" scored 10 straight knockouts; in '13 he won 33 times, with 18 kayos; between '15 and '17, he won 26 straight, 25 by knockout. This was during an era when even the game's most skillful knockout artists had as many no-decisions as they did wins. But Wilde, despite his spindly torso and reed-like legs, routinely knocked the stuffing out of men who outweighed him by 15 pounds or more. One such victim was Joe Conn, who outweighed Wilde by nearly 20 pounds and yet, in their London match in '18, Conn suffered no less than six 10th-round knockdowns, and was stopped two rounds later.

If you really want to get a feel for the girth of Wilde's talent and power, consider that before ever embarking on a professional career, he developed his skills in so-called booth bouts, which were an attraction of traveling fairs at the time. According to the lore, his promoter offered one pound to any man, regardless of his size, who could last three rounds with the tiny Welshman, and never once did he have to pay up. The best estimates place the number of booth bouts Wilde fought in at about 700, and they were good training for his pro career; out of the gate he went 83 fights without a loss. His first defeat, suffered at the hands of Scotland's Tancy Lee for the British and European flyweight titles in '16, was avenged with an 11th-round knockout later the same year.

Wilde's seven-year stint as the flyweight world champion, during which he defended the title against such stalwart contenders as Lee, Young Zulu Kid, Johnny Rosner, and George Clark, ended abruptly when Filipino Pancho Villa dethroned him in seven rounds at the Polo Grounds in New York. Many felt at the time that Wilde had been softened up by former bantamweight king Pete Herman, who had stopped him in 17 rounds two years earlier in Wilde's previous fight. It didn't matter either way. Wilde had already established himself as an all-time flyweight great, and perhaps the best fighter Britain ever produced. Not bad for a little guy.

14 PERNELL WHITAKER

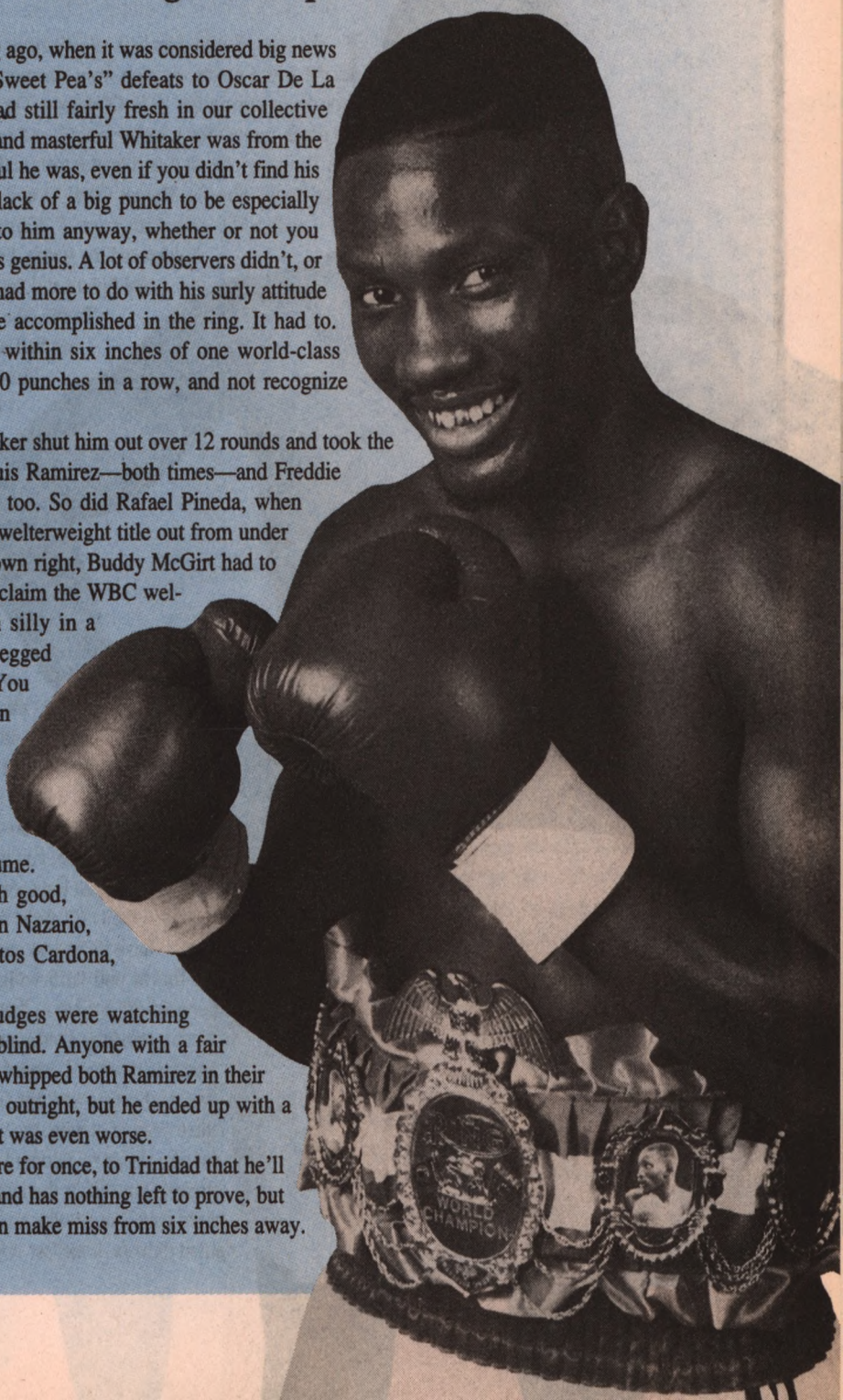
41-3-1 (17); IBF lightweight champion 1989-'92, WBC lightweight champion 1989-'92, WBA lightweight champion 1990-'92, IBF junior welterweight champion '92, WBC welterweight champion 1993-'97, WBA junior middleweight champion '95

There was a time, and it wasn't that long ago, when it was considered big news if Whitaker lost a round. But with "Sweet Pea's" defeats to Oscar De La Hoya and, more recently, to Felix Trinidad still fairly fresh in our collective memory, it's easy to forget how dominant and masterful Whitaker was from the moment he turned pro in 1984. But masterful he was, even if you didn't find his defensive wizardry, his clowning, and his lack of a big punch to be especially captivating or exciting. It never mattered to him anyway, whether or not you liked him, just so long as you recognized his genius. A lot of observers didn't, or they acknowledged it grudgingly, and this had more to do with his surly attitude and his arrogance than it did with what he accomplished in the ring. It had to. Because how could you watch him stand within six inches of one world-class fighter after another and make him miss 10 punches in a row, and not recognize how special The Pea was?

Greg Haugen recognized it, when Whitaker shut him out over 12 rounds and took the IBF lightweight title in '89. So did Jose Luis Ramirez—both times—and Freddie Pendleton. And the great Azumah Nelson, too. So did Rafael Pineda, when Whitaker snuck in and stole the IBF junior welterweight title out from under him, and as fine a fighter as he was in his own right, Buddy McGirt had to see it, too, when Whitaker spanked him to claim the WBC welterweight title in '93, and then beat him silly in a return a year later in a match McGirt had begged for and then was probably sorry he got. You would have thought that that was as far up in weight as a short guy like Whitaker could go, but before we knew it there he was at 154, boxing rings around Julio Cesar Vasquez and adding the WBA junior middleweight title to his ever-expanding resume. And all the while he was cruising through good, honest contenders like Anthony Jones, Juan Nazario, Harold Brazier, Jake Rodriguez, and Santos Cardona, barely losing a round.

But in two of his biggest fights the judges were watching something else and Whitaker was robbed blind. Anyone with a fair set of eyes and a clear conscience knew he whipped both Ramirez in their first fight and the great Julio Cesar Chavez outright, but he ended up with a decision loss that was horrid and a draw that was even worse.

Whitaker said after losing, fair and square for once, to Trinidad that he'll fight on. He's a lock for the Hall of Fame and has nothing left to prove, but even now, there are plenty of fighters he can make miss from six inches away. Few have ever done it better.



15 RAY LEONARD

36-3-1 (25); WBC welterweight champion 1979-'80, '80-'82, WBA junior middleweight champion 1981, unified welterweight champion 1981-'82, WBC middleweight champion 1987, WBC light heavyweight champion 1988, WBC super middleweight champion 1988-'90

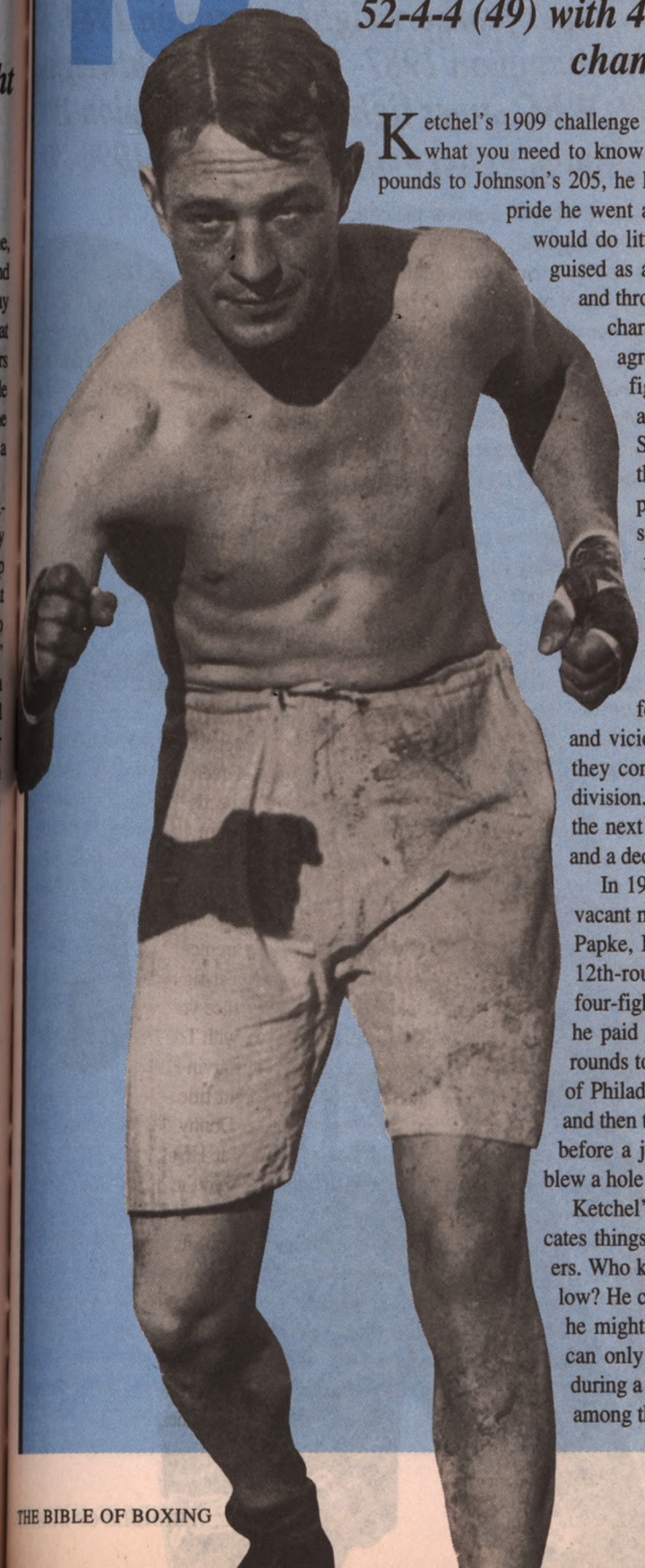
Like many before him and several since, Leonard was both despised and adored. To some, he was a media creation from the moment America got a look at his flashing smile and good looks during the 1976 Olympics. They said he was sheltered and protected, made way too much money for a welterweight, and would disintegrate the first time a real pro went at him. To these folks, it didn't matter that on the way up Leonard fought good, tough contenders such as Randy Shields, Marcos Geraldo, and Pete Ranzany. After he won the welterweight title with a 15th-round stoppage of Wilfred Benitez in '79, they grudgingly admitted that he was indeed the goods, but was too damned in love with the camera to be a real fighter and, later on, too much of an egomaniac to cheer for.

To the other contingent, he was the freshest breath of air boxing had seen in a long time, the star the game had badly needed since Muhammad Ali had retired. This group loved his fast hands and power, and marveled at his grace, skill, and presence. They had no problem at all with him attaching "Sugar" to his name and, in fact, thought it was a pretty good fit. They gasped open-mouthed when he flattened capable title challenger Davey "Boy" Green with a single left hook in '80, shook their heads in dismay when Roberto Duran outpointed him for the title in Montreal, and cheered wildly when he embarrassed Duran into quitting in the now-famous "No Mas" rematch. And they cried when a detached retina prompted what would be a short-lived retirement in '82.

How you view the biggest fights of Leonard's career depends on which side of the fence you're on. If you're on the first side, you think his megafight with Tommy Hearns in '81 was stopped too soon; that Marvelous Marvin Hagler should have won their '87 fight for the middleweight title; that Leonard couldn't have picked an easier opponent than Donny Lalonde to win titles in his fourth and fifth weight classes; and that Hearns was robbed when Leonard got a draw in their rematch in '89. If you're on the other side, each victory stands as a testament to Leonard's heart, skill, and talent: Hearns' life was saved when Leonard was pulled off of him in the 14th round; Hagler was outhustled and out-finessed by a master boxer who hadn't fought in three years; Lalonde was … well, okay, they'll concede that one; and despite having dropped Leonard twice early, Hearns was on the verge of being stopped himself in the last round of the rematch. The bottom line: Leonard could have stayed with any welterweight in history and was one of the most gifted fighters of the last 100 years. That's why he's here.

16 STANLEY KETCHEL

52-4-4 (49) with 4 no-decisions; middleweight champion 1908-'10



Ketchel's 1909 challenge of heavyweight champion Jack Johnson tells you most of what you need to know about him. First, he knew his limitations; at a scant 170 pounds to Johnson's 205, he knew he had no chance in a legitimate fight, so despite his pride he went along with the promoters and agreed that he and Johnson would do little more than engage in a high-profile sparring match disguised as a heavyweight title fight. Second, he was a fighter through and through, and as such, couldn't be trusted to go along with such a charade with so much money, pride, and fame on the line. So he agreed to follow the script, then at some point, either before the fight or during it, said to hell with it and planned a sneak-attack. Third, his punch was the envy of most heavyweights. So when his surprise right hand crashed off Johnson's jaw in the 12th round, the heavyweight champion of the world crumpled to the canvas. And fourth, Ketchel wasn't terribly smart—his double cross cost him several teeth and a good five minutes of consciousness as he lay spread-eagled on the mat at Johnson's feet after "The Galveston Giant" laid him out with a right hand of his own.

Okay, so Ketchel was no match for Johnson. (What middleweight would have been?) But he was more than a match for the rest of the world's 165- to 180-pounders. His power and viciousness were unparalleled in the early-1900s, and together they conspired to help him run roughshod over the middleweight division. In his second year as a pro, Ketchel went 17-0-1 (17). Over the next two years, he tallied 10 more kayos, along with two draws and a decision win.

In 1908, he brutalized Jack Sullivan over 20 rounds to claim the vacant middleweight title, and defended against top contenders Billy Papke, Hugo Kelly, and Joe Thomas, before losing it to Papke by 12th-round stoppage in the second installment of their celebrated four-fight series. Papke's win was a display of insolence for which he paid dearly when Ketchel hammered him into submission in 11 rounds to regain the title two months later. After a non-title knockout of Philadelphia Jack O'Brien, another beating administered to Papke and then the Johnson fight were all the title fights Ketchel had time for before a jealous farm hand named Walter A. Dipley took a rifle and blew a hole in his back in 1910, killing him. He was 24.

Ketchel's death, which came in the prime of his fighting life, complicates things when it comes to ranking him among history's great fighters. Who knows who he might've beaten, or lost to, in the years to follow? He could have been knocked out and ruined in his next outing, or he might have reigned for another 10 years. We'll never know, and can only go by what he accomplished and how he accomplished it during a career that was far too short. And on that basis, we place him among the century's finest.

17 JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ

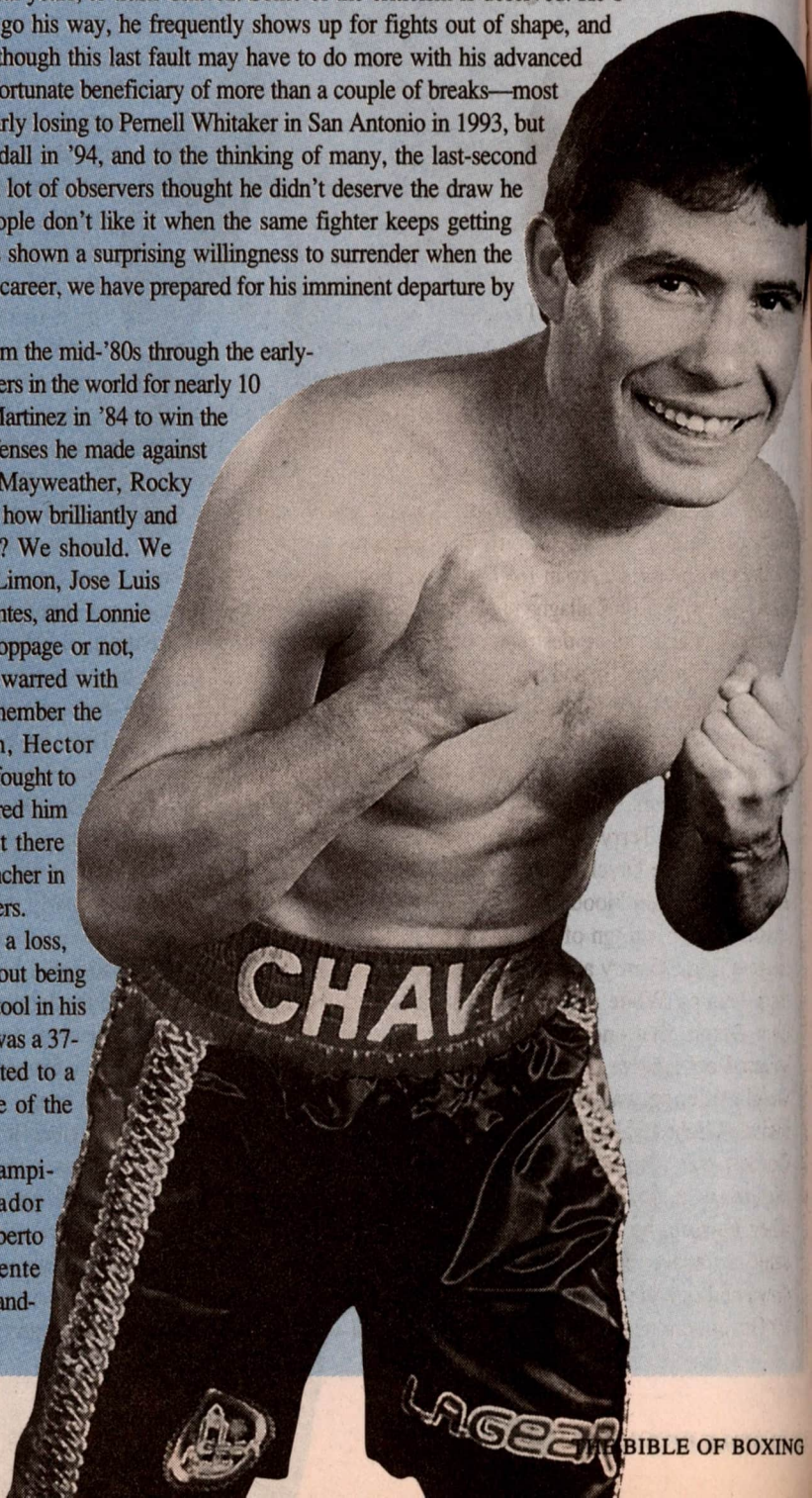
101-3-2 (84); WBC super featherweight champion 1984-'87, WBA lightweight champion 1987-'89, WBC lightweight champion 1988-'89, WBC super lightweight champion 1989-'94, 94-'96, IBF junior welterweight champion 1990-'91

It's become very fashionable, over the last several years, to trash Chavez. Some of the criticism is deserved. He's become increasingly whiny when things don't go his way, he frequently shows up for fights out of shape, and often seems to work just hard enough to get by (though this last fault may have to do more with his advanced years than with laziness). And yes, he's been the fortunate beneficiary of more than a couple of breaks—most notably the horrendous draw he received after clearly losing to Pernell Whitaker in San Antonio in 1993, but also the technical decision win over Frankie Randall in '94, and to the thinking of many, the last-second stoppage win over Meldrick Taylor in '90. And a lot of observers thought he didn't deserve the draw he got against Miguel Angel Gonzalez last year. People don't like it when the same fighter keeps getting breaks, and it doesn't help Chavez that lately he's shown a surprising willingness to surrender when the going gets too hairy. So now, in the twilight of his career, we have prepared for his imminent departure by forgetting all that he's done. What a shame.

Have we forgotten how magnificent he was from the mid-'80s through the early-'90s? How he was one of the two or three best fighters in the world for nearly 10 years? Have we forgotten his knockout of Mario Martinez in '84 to win the WBC 130-pound title and the nine subsequent defenses he made against such established pros as Ruben Castillo, Roger Mayweather, Rocky Lockridge, and Juan LaPorte? Don't we remember how brilliantly and completely he took apart Edwin Rosario in '87? We should. We should also remember how he dissected Rafael Limon, Jose Luis Ramirez, Mayweather a second time, Sammy Fuentes, and Lonnie Smith. We should remember that, questionable stoppage or not, Taylor, a pound-for-pound contender before he warred with Chavez, was all but useless after. We should remember the horrific beatings Chavez gave Greg Haugen, Hector Camacho, and Terrance Alli, and how valiantly he fought to preserve his undefeated record when Randall floored him in their '94 struggle. We should remember that there wasn't a more active champion or a better bodypuncher in the world, a better left hook, or a better set of whiskers.

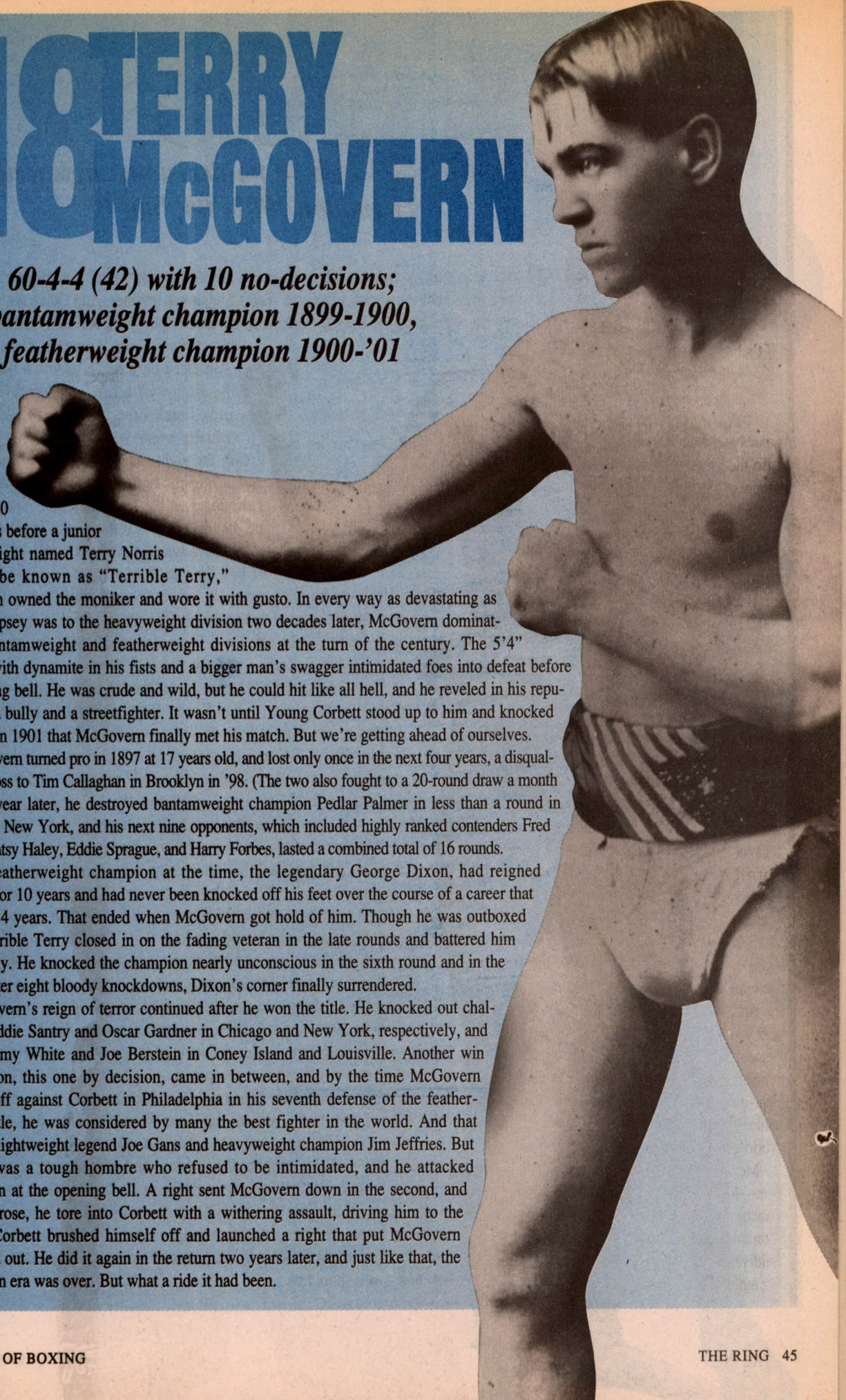
And even if you count the Whitaker fight as a loss, and you should, Chavez still went 86 fights without being beaten. Still, we complain because he quit on his stool in his rematch with Oscar De La Hoya, even though he was a 37-year-old junior welterweight facing what amounted to a junior middleweight who also happens to be one of the world's best boxers. Are we nuts?

Mexico has produced some magnificent champions—Ruben Olivares, Carlos Zarate, Salvador Sanchez—and a slew of very good ones—Humberto Gonzalez, Lupe Pintor, Pipino Cuevas, Vincente Saldivar. Chavez is the best and has earned his standing among the all-time greats.



18 TERRY McGOVERN

60-4-4 (42) with 10 no-decisions; bantamweight champion 1899-1900, featherweight champion 1900-'01



A full 80 years before a junior middleweight named Terry Norris came to be known as "Terrible Terry," McGovern owned the moniker and wore it with gusto. In every way as devastating as Jack Dempsey was to the heavyweight division two decades later, McGovern dominated the bantamweight and featherweight divisions at the turn of the century. The 5'4" puncher with dynamite in his fists and a bigger man's swagger intimidated foes into defeat before the opening bell. He was crude and wild, but he could hit like all hell, and he reveled in his reputation as a bully and a streetfighter. It wasn't until Young Corbett stood up to him and knocked him cold in 1901 that McGovern finally met his match. But we're getting ahead of ourselves.

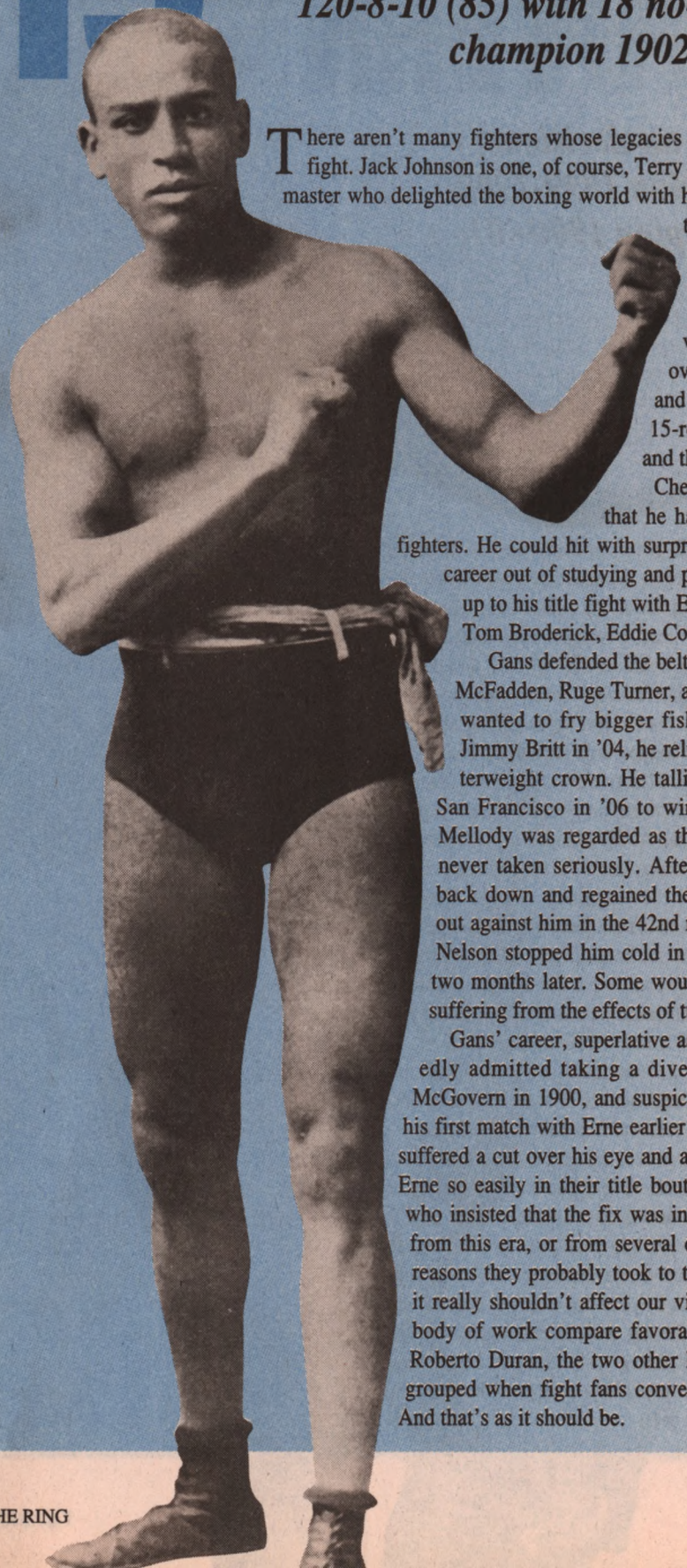
McGovern turned pro in 1897 at 17 years old, and lost only once in the next four years, a disqualification loss to Tim Callaghan in Brooklyn in '98. (The two also fought to a 20-round draw a month later.) A year later, he destroyed bantamweight champion Pedlar Palmer in less than a round in Tuckahoe, New York, and his next nine opponents, which included highly ranked contenders Fred Snyder, Patsy Haley, Eddie Sprague, and Harry Forbes, lasted a combined total of 16 rounds.

The featherweight champion at the time, the legendary George Dixon, had reigned supreme for 10 years and had never been knocked off his feet over the course of a career that spanned 14 years. That ended when McGovern got hold of him. Though he was outboxed early, Terrible Terry closed in on the fading veteran in the late rounds and battered him mercilessly. He knocked the champion nearly unconscious in the sixth round and in the eighth, after eight bloody knockdowns, Dixon's corner finally surrendered.

McGovern's reign of terror continued after he won the title. He knocked out challengers Eddie Santry and Oscar Gardner in Chicago and New York, respectively, and then Tommy White and Joe Berstein in Coney Island and Louisville. Another win over Dixon, this one by decision, came in between, and by the time McGovern squared off against Corbett in Philadelphia in his seventh defense of the featherweight title, he was considered by many the best fighter in the world. And that included lightweight legend Joe Gans and heavyweight champion Jim Jeffries. But Corbett was a tough hombre who refused to be intimidated, and he attacked McGovern at the opening bell. A right sent McGovern down in the second, and when he rose, he tore into Corbett with a withering assault, driving him to the canvas. Corbett brushed himself off and launched a right that put McGovern down and out. He did it again in the return two years later, and just like that, the McGovern era was over. But what a ride it had been.

19 JOE GANS

120-8-10 (85) with 18 no-decisions; lightweight champion 1902-'04, '06-'08



There aren't many fighters whose legacies are still intact nearly a century after their la fight. Jack Johnson is one, of course, Terry McGovern another. And Gans, the slick dancin master who delighted the boxing world with his counterpunching skill and heart just after t turn of the century, is another. Gans was the fir American-born black to win a world title an he did it with a first-round knockout of cha pion Frank Erne in 1902. This after meetin virtually every good lightweight on the plan over the eight years that preceded his coronation and a fair number of welterweights, too; he lost 15-rounder to the legendary Sam Langford in '0 and the following year drew with Joe Walcott.

Check out Gans' knockout total, and you can se that he had the punch to compete with bigger, strong fighters. He could hit with surprising power for one who made a Hall of Fam career out of studying and perfecting the game's finer nuances, and leadi up to his title fight with Erne, Gans stopped 10 of 11 opponents includi Tom Broderick, Eddie Connolly, and Jack Ryan.

Gans defended the belt nine times, turning back, among others, Georg McFadden, Ruge Turner, and Kid McPartland. But like so many others, h wanted to fry bigger fish, and after winning by disqualification ove Jimmy Britt in '04, he relinquished the title and set his sights on the we terweight crown. He tallied a 15th-round stoppage of Mike Sullivan i San Francisco in '06 to win a version of the 147-pound title, but Hone Mellody was regarded as the true welter champion, and Gans' claim wa never taken seriously. After several nondescript victories, Gans droppe back down and regained the lightweight belt when Battling Nelson foul out against him in the 42nd round. Four more title defenses followed befo Nelson stopped him cold in 17 rounds in '08, and then again in 21 roun two months later. Some would say later that "The Old Master" was alread suffering from the effects of tuberculosis, which took his life two years later.

Gans' career, superlative as it was, was not without dark spots. He report edly admitted taking a dive after a dubious second-round kayo loss t McGovern in 1900, and suspicion circulated for years that he did the same i his first match with Erne earlier the same year. He was winning easily when h suffered a cut over his eye and abruptly quit in the 12th round. That he handle Erne so easily in their title bout two years later buttressed the claims of tho who insisted that the fix was in. But Gans wouldn't be the first Hall of Famer from this era, or from several others for that matter, who deliberately lost fo reasons they probably took to their graves. And with all that he accomplished it really shouldn't affect our view of him or his legacy. Gans' record and h body of work compare favorably to those compiled by Benny Leonard an Roberto Duran, the two other lightweight legends with whom he is typically grouped when fight fans converge to recall the best 135-pound fighters ever. And that's as it should be.

20 KID GAVILAN

107-30-6 (28); welterweight champion 1951-'54

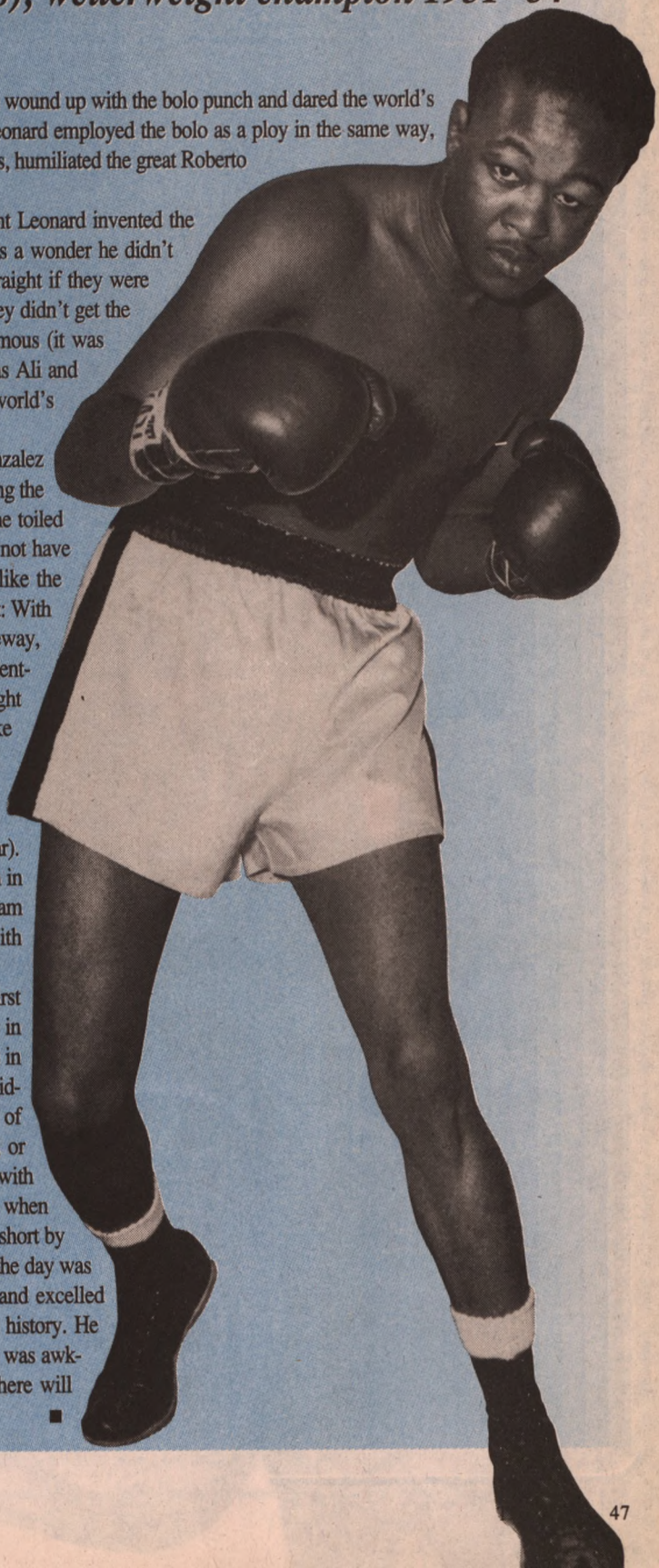
In the 1960s and '70s, fans of Muhammad Ali loved it when he wound up with the bolo punch and dared the world's best big men to hit him. A full generation later, Sugar Ray Leonard employed the bolo as a ploy in the same way, and his incessant use of it, among other similarly degrading antics, humiliated the great Roberto Duran into quitting in their infamous "No Mas" fight in '80.

A lot of Leonard fans, particularly the younger ones, thought Leonard invented the bolo (and considering Leonard's penchant for self-adulation, it's a wonder he didn't promptly re-name the punch "The Leonard.") They were set straight if they were told Ali was throwing the bolo before Leonard was born, but they didn't get the whole story unless they knew that Gavilan made the punch famous (it was invented by Ceferino Garcia) and that he didn't use it for fun, as Ali and Leonard did, but as a surprisingly effective weapon against the world's best welterweights in the '40s and '50s.

According to Gavilan, whose given name was Gerardo Gonzalez (doesn't have the same ring, does it?) he perfected the punch during the years he spent wielding a machete in the sugar fields in which he toiled before becoming a professional fighter in '43. That may or may not have been accurate—it sounds a little Runyonesque and too much like the work of a frustrated publicist to be so, but of this there is no doubt: With the exception of Sugar Ray Robinson, and perhaps with a little leeway, Carmen Basilio, there wasn't another welterweight from that talent-rich era who enjoyed so much success against other welterweight stars. Between '48 and '53, Gavilan defeated Tommy Bell, Ike Williams, Rocky Castellani, Beau Jack, Billy Graham, Tony Janiro, Eugene Hairston, Johnny Bratton (for the title), Gil Turner, Chuck Davey, and Basilio, just to name a few (though admittedly, his '53 decision win over Basilio was highly unpopular).

Gavilan lost his share: Robinson bested him in '48 and again in '49; Williams beat him in the first of their three matches; Graham got past him once in four tries; and he split his two bouts with Hairston.

An exceptionally active champion and one of the game's first great television regulars, Gavilan defended the title seven times in three years before losing it to the well-connected Johnny Saxton in '54, seven months after an unsuccessful bid for Bobo Olson's middleweight title. "The Cuban Hawk" never put together the kind of monstrous, multi-year winning streaks Robinson, Willie Pep, or some other Hall of Famers did, and he ended his career in '58 with 30 losses (though a full half of them came in his last 26 fights, when even the bolo couldn't save him any longer.) His title reign was short by most legends' standards, and his stay among the top fighters of the day was comparatively brief. But he was never stopped in 143 fights and excelled against perhaps the single finest collection of 147-pounders in history. He couldn't deck your grandmother with his Sunday punch, but he was awkward, cagey, impossible to discourage, and fun as all hell. There will never be another like him. ■



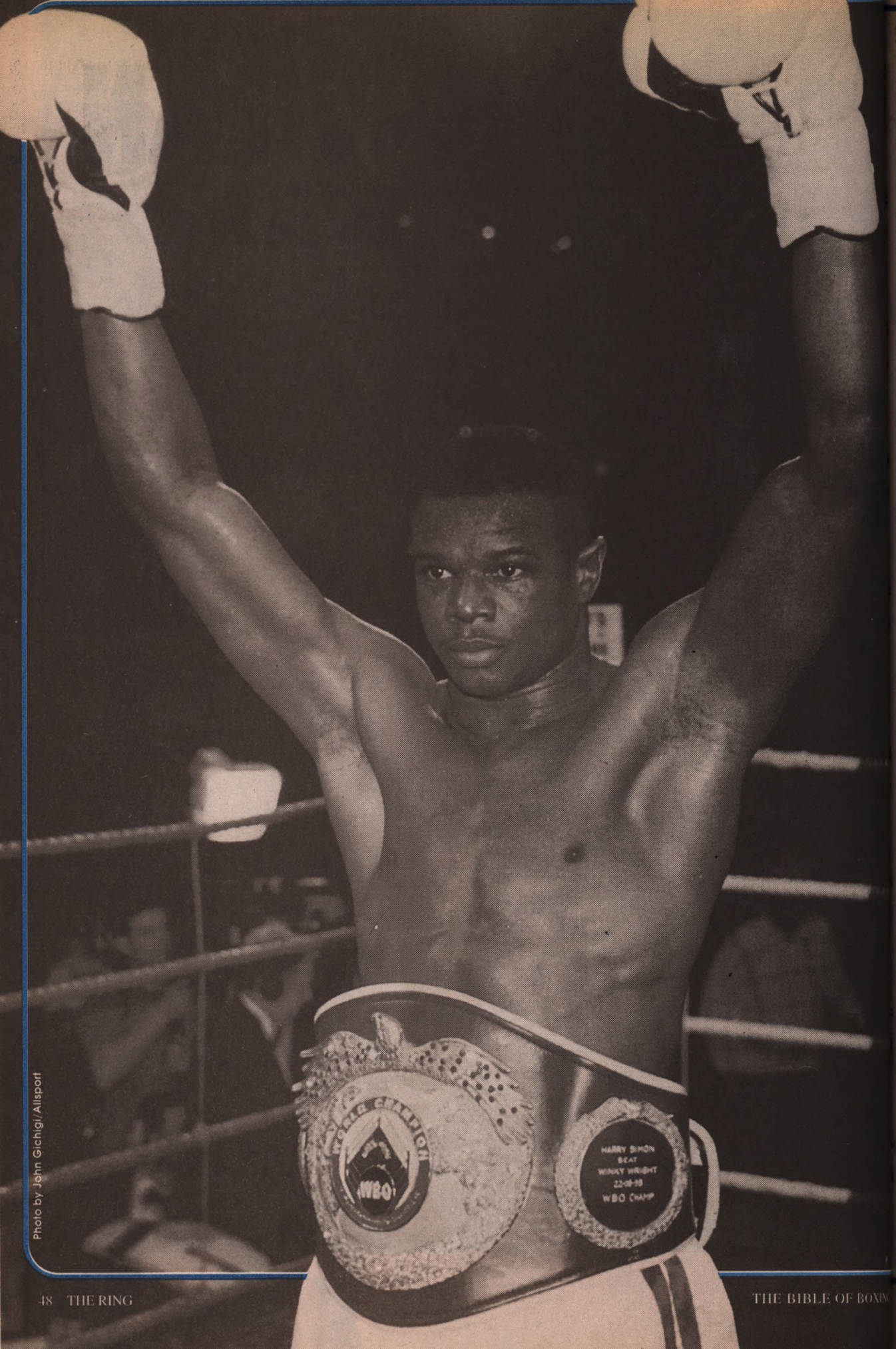


Photo by John Gichigi/Allsport

By Brian Doogan

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT HARRY SIMON

No Longer Running From His Victims

David Reid. Fernando Vargas. Soon to be joined by such luminaries as Oscar De La Hoya, Felix Trinidad, and Ike Quartey. Draw two names in any combination from this esteemed ensemble, never mind the formidable supporting cast, and you have a fight. A real fight, where a tightness in the belly is not a sensation experienced merely by the performers. Have them square off until the last man stands, and you have a fistic Valhalla, the ritual elevation of one to the gods.

De La Hoya stands closest to the pinnacle now, though Trinidad has the tools and self-belief to beat him. Some feel that Quartey did beat him. Reid and Vargas are young guns holding world titles and seeking a big victim.

But Harry Simon, a 27-year-old relative nonentity from Namibia, is a fighter who may surpass everyone in and around the junior middleweight class. Unbeaten in 18 fights with 15 knockouts, his sights are set higher than the spurious WBO belt he currently holds. When you have outboxed and outpunched Winky Wright, the most disarmingly elusive practitioner in the division, it is your right to be ambitious. But Simon's aspirations stem from something much deeper. When you know all too well another feeling in the belly that comes from having had to queue up for food as a child and go hungry on the days you decided to go to school, an aspiring nature was formed for basic survival.

"I liked school. I was good at school. I would always put my hand in the air when the teacher asked questions," said Simon, who was nine when he first used his hands in a destructive fashion inside a boxing ring in Walvis Bay. "My problem was that I couldn't go to school every day. If I went to school, there would be no food when I got home. That was the reality of life.

"My father left when I was three months old, and my mother, Katherine, was left to bring up eight of us. She struggled so much for us eight kids. Her death in 1988 was very painful for me because I never got the chance to repay her for all she had done, to be the one earning the money for food.

"We had to wait outside a shop from morning until night to eat. So it was better to take three days off school and queue for the food than to come home and starve. The days I went to school, I had to do without. It was a harsh upbringing, but you accept that that's the way it was."

Inevitably, Simon formed an acquaintance with the streets that frequently culminated in an acquaintance with a pair of fists. Young Harry could look after himself, whether the hunger was on him or not. Naturally athletic, he was a good gymnast and proficient in karate. With little else to occupy and stimulate his mind, being able to handle himself was a satisfaction of sorts.

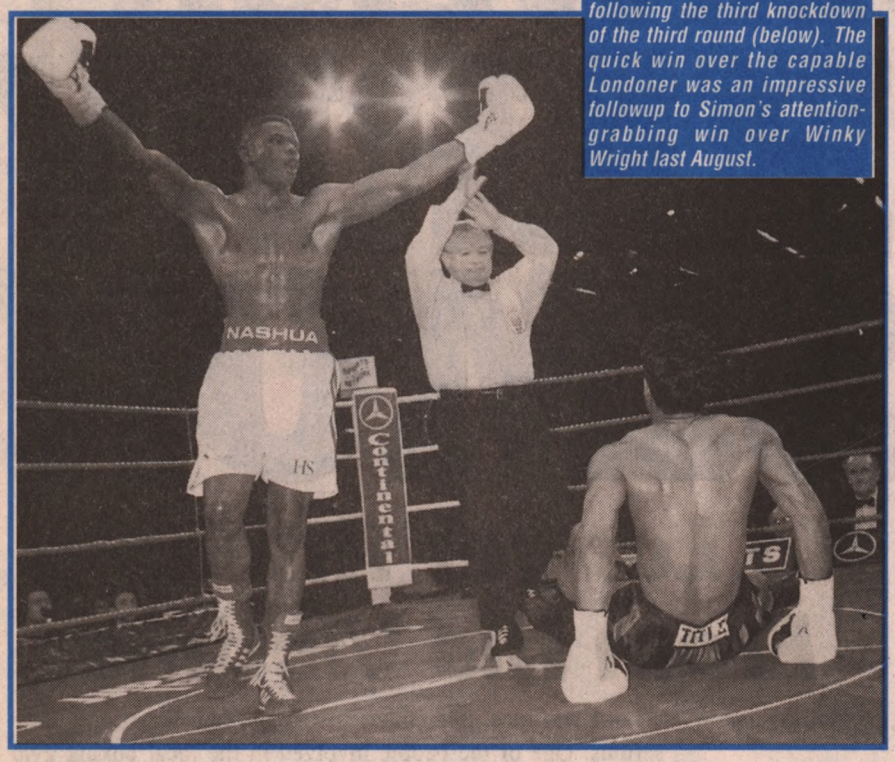
"I was a naughty boy," recalled Simon, who turned pro in 1994 after representing Namibia at the Barcelona Olympics two years previously, linking up with present manager and trainer, Brian Mitchell, the brilliant former WBA junior lightweight champion, after nine fights. "I was streetfighting when I was nine. Sometimes it was just fun, sometimes more serious. One of the people involved in the local boxing gym saw me fighting one day and advised me to go along. The very next day I did."

With startling consequences.

"I was made to spar with a 13-year-old boy who had been junior Namibian champion for three years in a row," explained Simon, speaking after returning to the gym four weeks after crushing former Trinidad victim Kevin Lueshing in three rounds in London. "I put the gloves on and I liked the feeling. I knocked the boy out in the first round with a straight right."

Far from it being a thoroughly exhilarating experience, Simon was suddenly gripped by fear.

Photos by John Gichigi/Allsport



Simon watches Kevin Lueshing crumble (above) and then celebrates as referee Lou Moret waves off the contest following the third knockdown of the third round (below). The quick win over the capable Londoner was an impressive followup to Simon's attention-grabbing win over Winky Wright last August.

"I ran away. I thought they would do something to me," he said, the memory still vivid. "I was on my own. The people in the gym all knew this other boy. He was their friend. I ran out the door and it was three, four days before the man who had spotted me in the street persuaded me to come back. It then all started from there."

In almost 300 amateur bouts, Simon lost only twice. But he retired from the sport for two years following the disappointment of Barcelona, where he believed he would win a medal.

"I didn't feel well. I was disillusioned," he said. "But I had to do something to make a proper living, so I came to South Africa in 1994 and became a professional fighter."

When he came to Mitchell, he was a 22-year-old with a reservoir of talent, but barely a quart of confidence.

"His confidence was not very high all considering he was nine fight unbeaten," said Mitchell, beaten on once early in a remarkable career th culminated in 14 unbeaten world tit fights and regarded so highly by Simo that he named his son after him. "I ha to condition him mentally. He was mot vated by my career, but he also had th memory of his youth, the poverty fro which he came, to drive him on.

"He could speak only two language when he arrived with me, Afrikaans an Awambo. Now he speaks very goo English. He is a fast learner. Unfor tunately, he can get a bit lazy. His com mitment at times has been questionable After beating Winky Wright, I agreed h was entitled to party. But the party last ed from August to December. He ha promised me now to be committed. If he is, he will be the best fighter in the ligh middleweight division."

Second only to soccer among the most popular sporting pursuits in South Africa, boxing has made Simon a big name and a hero back in his homeland where sprinter Frankie Fredericks is one of the few other athletes of renown. Like everyone else who weighs between 14 and 160 pounds, he is striving towar something bigger. He craves a clash with De La Hoya and is emphatic in his forecast of a darkened fate for "The Golden Boy."

"I've told my manager and my pro moter to please, get me Oscar," Simon said. "I know how to put him out. Many people just don't know the right way. have the secret.

"He can only be beaten by an African. A man with the heart of a fighter not because he has become one, but because that is the way he has had to be every day of his life simply to survive. An African man does not give up. Look at Ike Quartey, out on his feet in the final round, but he kept punching and he survived. And some people believe he won the fight. I am better than Quartey. I respect him. But I am a better fighter. I can box well, punch well, and I don't back up. I stay on a man."

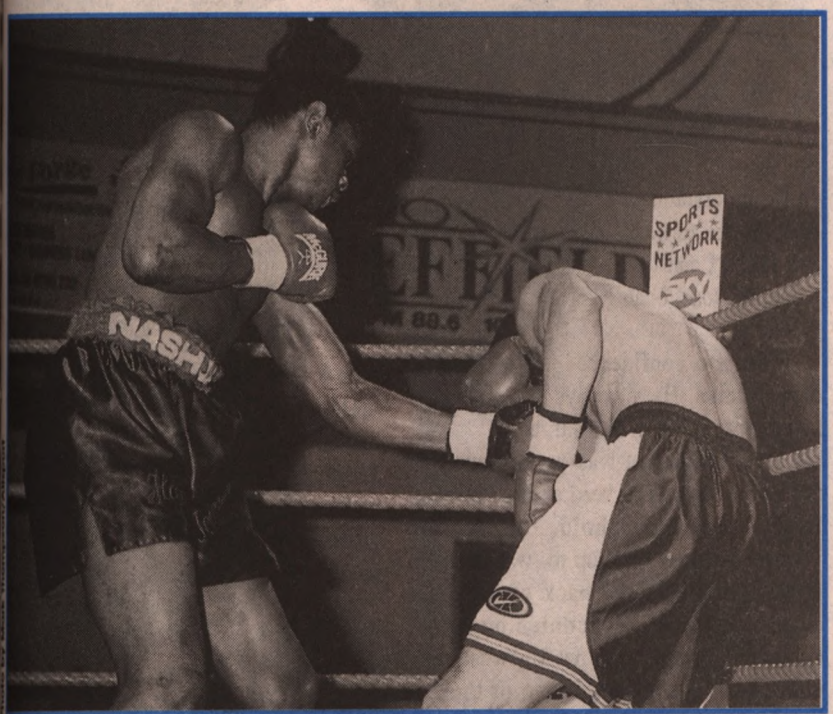
The most recent demonstration of this, against Lueshing, supports Simon's claims as one of the sport's emerging talents. Englishman Lueshing

whose modelling has earned him the moniker, "The Look," was left looking for a few more catwalk engagements after being systematically hammered into retirement at 2:08 of round three.

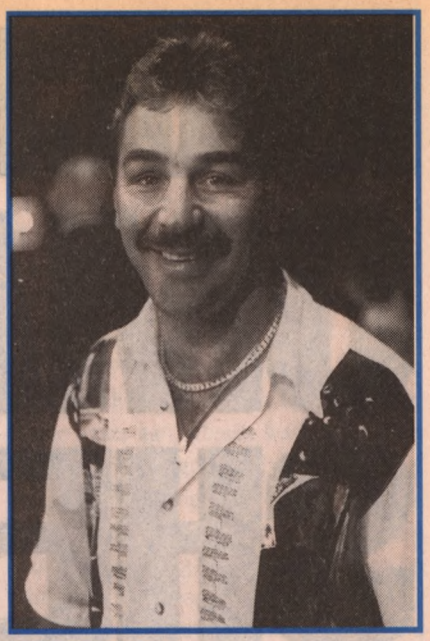
"Harry has a left hook to the body which would make Marco Antonio Barrera jealous," said Harold Lederman, HBO's ringside scorer and one of the three official judges at the National Sports Centre in Crystal Palace, London. "He kept Lueshing on the back foot most of the fight and hammered him to the head and body with both hands. I have no idea who Simon wants next, but I sure would love to see him on *Boxing After Dark* against Reid, Vargas, or Keith Mullings. Harry would be competitive with any of these guys."

Like De La Hoya, the memory of his mother provides major motivation for Simon. But the Namibian is spurred farther by two recent tragedies to strike his family, the deaths of his brother Gasgus in December 1997 and his sister Elizabeth exactly 12 months later.

Simon is not only a powerful puncher, as his 15 knockouts in 18 fights suggest, but is also a highly skilled boxer with a sound sense of defense. Here, he ducks a left hand from British trialhorse Kasi Kaihau en route to a fourth-round kayo.



Says judge Harold Lederman, Simon "has a left hook to the body which would make Marco Antonio Barrera jealous." Kaihau, pictured taking such a shot from the Namibian, would probably agree.



Former 130-pound champion Brian Mitchell has been Simon's trainer since after his ninth pro fight, and Simon named one of his children after the South African great. Mitchell has questioned Simon's commitment in the past, but says his pupil has promised him those days are over.

"They were both asthmatics and they died because they could not afford proper care and attention," he revealed. "I was going to help them, but I hadn't made enough money by then. I still haven't, although now I would have been able to make life more comfortable for them.

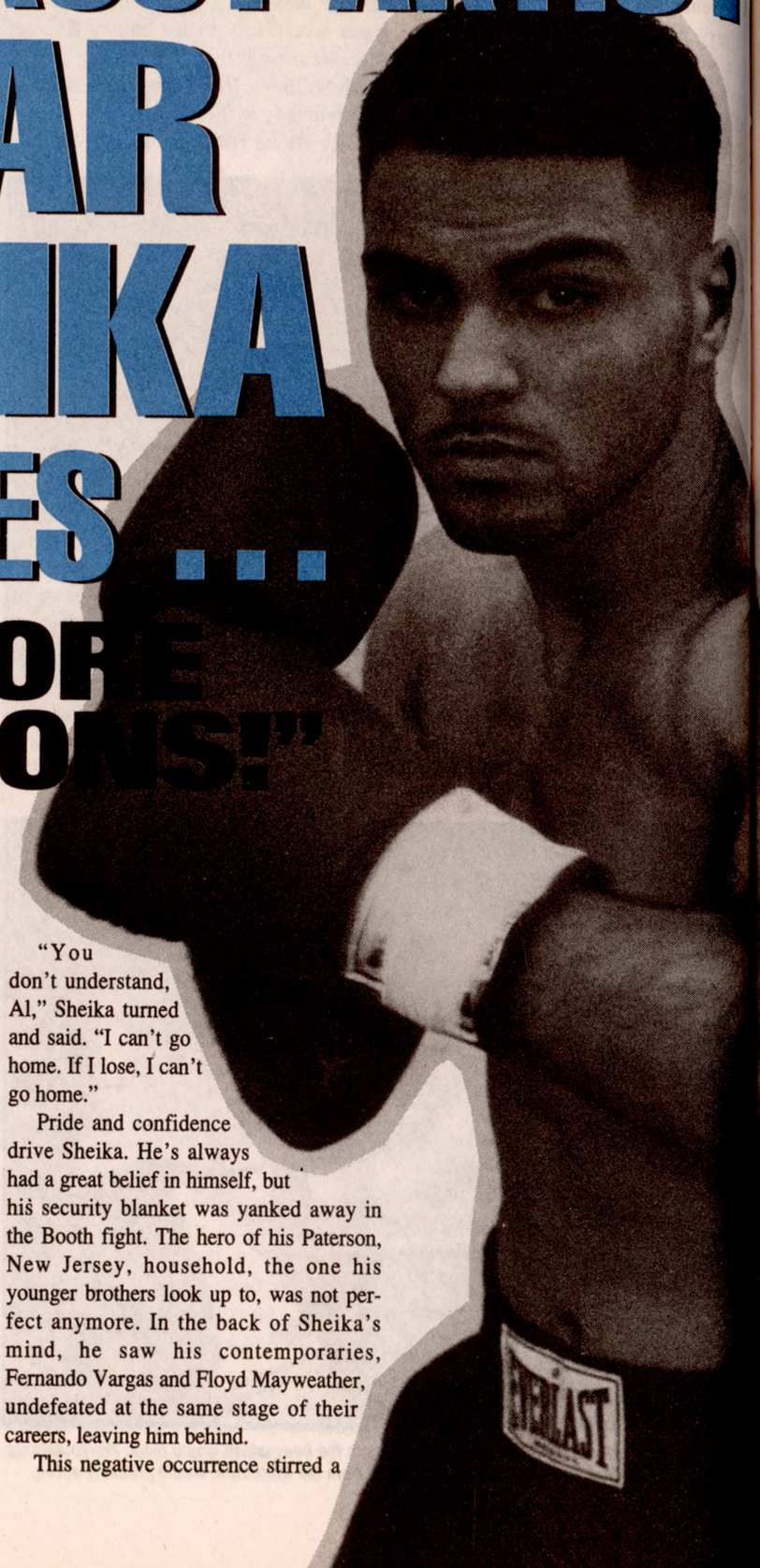
"It saddens me to think of this. Material wealth is unimportant to me as a thing in itself. But to have a good standard of life, you need money. I never want my kids to have to grow up the same way I did. I now have my own five-bedroom house in the Walvis Bay area. The population of Namibia is only two million in total, and people look up to me because of my achievements. I have to be a role model for them and for my children, and I vowed to do something special for my dead mother. I simply have to keep winning."

The evidence from 18 fights suggests that what Simon says, he does. ■

Brian Doogan is THE RING'S *European correspondent.*

KNOCKOUT ARTIST OMAR SHEIKA DECIDES . . .

"NO MORE DECISIONS!"



By Joe Santoliquito

The muffled sounds of the crowd were barely audible down in the locker room, where Omar Sheika sat in stunned disbelief, a blank stare on his face. In the hours immediately after the fight, he wouldn't eat, and he kept asking anyone within sight if he could change this bad thing that just happened to him. He was embarrassed, like someone had cut a hole in him and siphoned out all of his pride.

Sheika had just lost for the first time as a professional, dropping an eight-round decision to England's Tony Booth in July 1998. His longtime trainer, Al Velazquez, was trying to convince the young super middleweight he had fought well enough to win, that he was the victim of a skewed decision, and it really was not the end of the world.

"You don't understand, Al," Sheika turned and said. "I can't go home. If I lose, I can't go home."

Pride and confidence drive Sheika. He's always had a great belief in himself, but his security blanket was yanked away in the Booth fight. The hero of his Paterson, New Jersey, household, the one his younger brothers look up to, was not perfect anymore. In the back of Sheika's mind, he saw his contemporaries, Fernando Vargas and Floyd Mayweather, undefeated at the same stage of their careers, leaving him behind.

This negative occurrence stirred a transformation in Sheika. He found he was vulnerable, and the 6', 22-year-old Sheika, 17-1 (12), admits his attitude toward boxing has changed as a result. Coming off an impressive three-round knockout victory of Demetrius Jenkins in Baltimore on May 14, Sheika now finds himself a rising star in the barren land of the super middleweights, on the cusp of a title shot, possibly against WBC 168-pound champ Richie Woodhall by the end of the year.

If Sheika goes on to win a world championship, he may one day be able to thank Booth, a clubfighter who was an 11th-hour substitute for Paschal Collins, the brother of Steve Collins. Sheika claims Booth never showed up for the weigh-in and appeared very large to him when they met in the ring. Still, Sheika says he dominated the fight and deserved the decision, and by most unbiased accounts of the fight, he may be right.

"I think I gained a lot from the Booth experience," Sheika said. "It made me wonder how dirty boxing can be. It can be even dirtier than drugs, and I realize every sport can be dirty, but to me, drugs is the dirtiest thing you can be involved in. When you step into a ring and get robbed, it hurts you. It hurts you more than you can believe. I have a lot of supporters and a lot of family, and I felt I let them down. I didn't know how to face it at first. My family just stood by me.

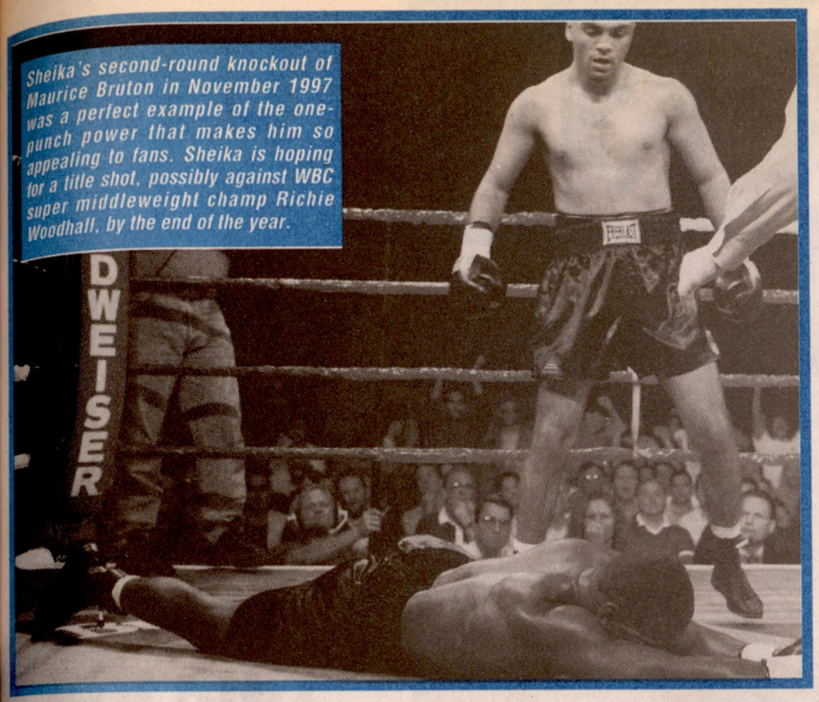
"I worked real hard for that fight and I'm a firm believer that the best man wins. I was the best man that night against Booth. Now, I go into the ring and I want to hurt the other guy badly. Once I get in there, I'm a whole different person than I used to be. It's a tough game. I want to be the boss now, I don't want to leave a decision in anyone's hands but mine."

Part of Sheika's growth has involved loosening his hardheaded way of thinking. Three years ago, Sheika was a late riser. Now he runs regularly in the morning. After the Booth fight, he quickly incorporated a weight training regimen into his routine, something Velazquez had been on him about for some time. His dietary habits have changed considerably, and he's even watching film of upcoming opponents, an idea he scoffed at in the past because of his point-the-guy-out-to-me, I'll-take-him attitude.

Sheika now has foresight, with a path plotted toward a title. He has a fight plan all mapped out on how to attack an opponent, an idea that was once as foreign to him as losing to Booth.

"Omar's much more focused since that Booth fight," Velazquez said. "You have

(Continued on page 76)



Sheika's second-round knockout of Maurice Bruton in November 1997 was a perfect example of the one-punch power that makes him so appealing to fans. Sheika is hoping for a title shot, possibly against WBC super middleweight champ Richie Woodhall, by the end of the year.

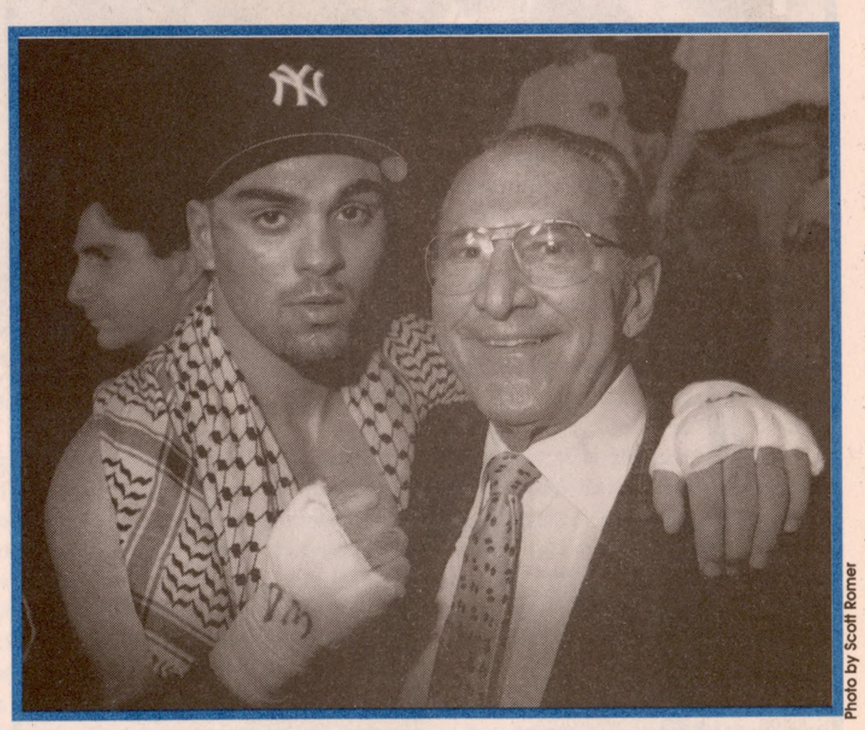
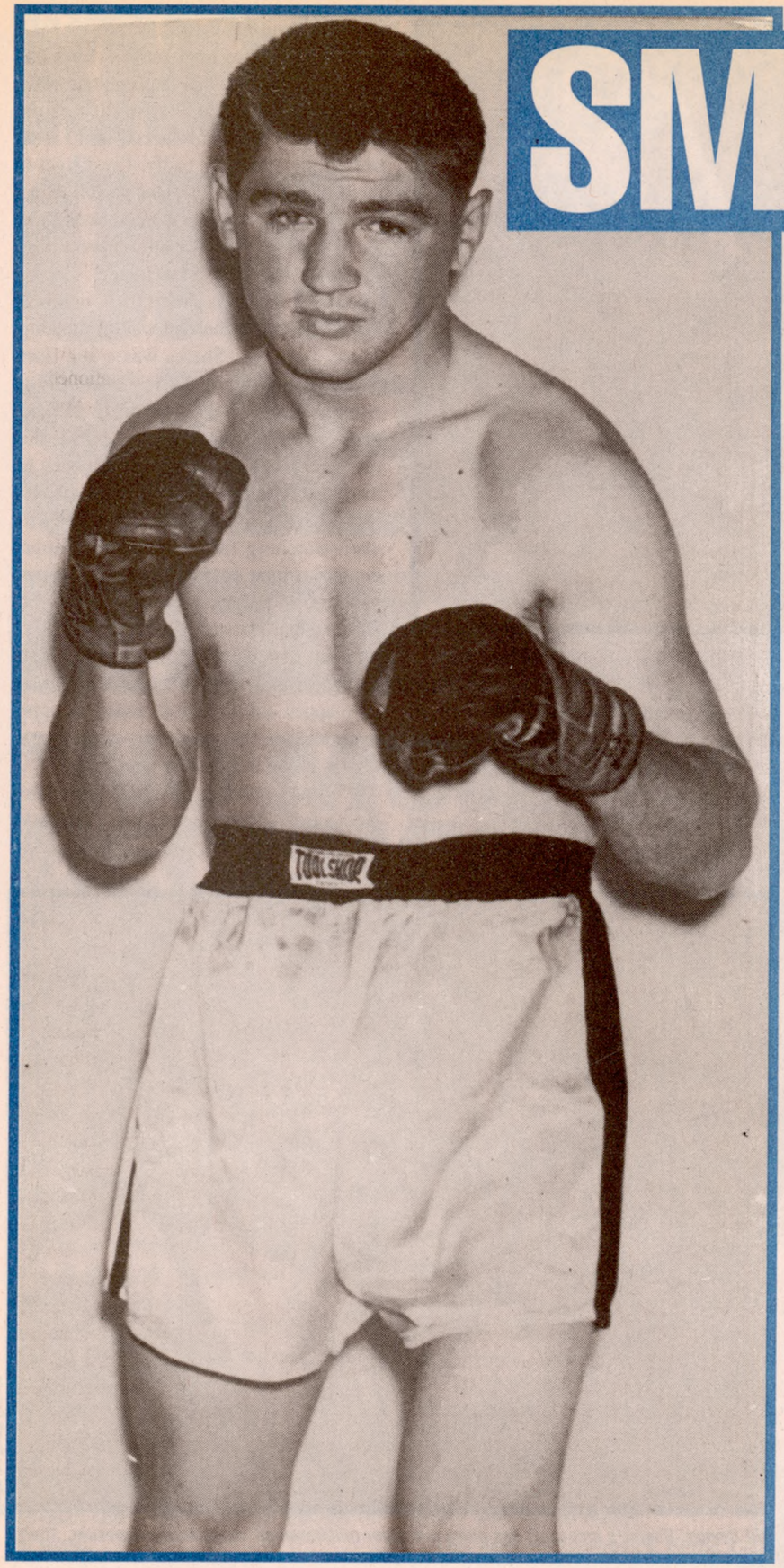


Photo by Scott Romer

Bill Cayton, Sheika's manager, has given the super middleweight considerable exposure. Sheika appeared on television in 11 of his first 12 pro fights.

SMOKIN' ANDREWS



Cigarettes Proved Hazardous To His Title Bid

By Pete Ehrmann

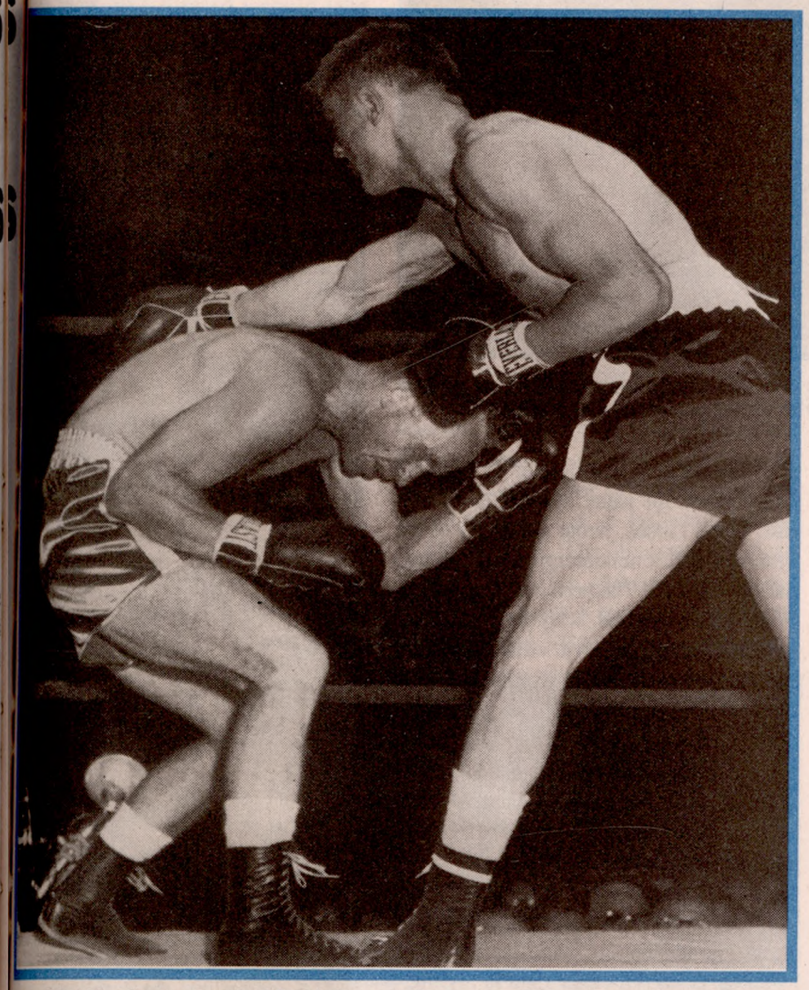
No lugubrious treatise from the American Medical Association is necessary to convince Andrews that when two men enter an 18-foot-square ring to swap leather, the results can be hazardous to their health.

"You don't realize it at the time, but it takes its toll," said the 1950s welterweight and middleweight contender, now 68, who had 91 professional fights. "It's a tough business. I got a little brain damage at the end. I'm kinda paralyzed on my right side a little bit."

But ban boxing? While recommending closer supervision and maybe "brain wave tests every six months to a year" for boxers, the Rhinelander, Wisconsin, resident who fought nine world champions during his eight-year career, said nothing doing.

"Boxing's a helluva sport. If I could do it all again, I'd do the same thing," said Andrews. "There's nothing I'd rather do than get in the ring and fight a good 10-rounder."

But he's sympathetic to another AMA crusade aimed at saving people from themselves. Although he doesn't go so far as to suggest sticking an additional warn-



Andrews' first big win came against Chuck Davey in September 1953. Andrews dropped Davey in the second round and went on to take a unanimous decision. The 22-year-old underdog repeated the performance later the same year on national television.

ing on cigarette packs saying that smoking can be hazardous to your chances of winning a world title, Andrews said he's proof that it's true.

"If it hadn't been for tobacco," he said, "I could've become champion of the world."

Andrews picked up both the smoking and boxing habit when he was a teenager. The eldest of eight boys in his family, Andrews and his brothers would put on the gloves in their home in Oliver, Wisconsin. There wasn't a lot else to do in the village of just 201 persons about six miles south of Superior, the largest city in the northwest corner of the Badger State. The Andrews home had no indoor plumbing, so the boys were also kept busy going to a nearby spring for fresh water. Andrews also played the accordion in a trio that included his guitar-playing dad and a friend on the clarinet. They were quite the hit on the local wedding circuit.

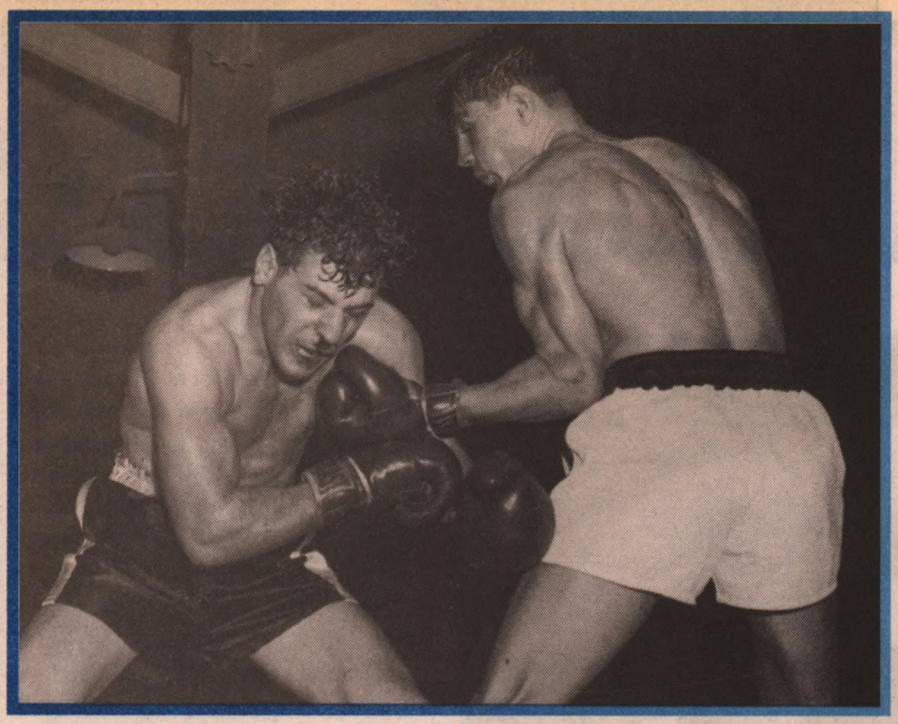
Andrews quit school at 17 and enlisted in the military. He won the Fifth Army middleweight title, and while stationed in the Philippines had a few bouts that never found their way onto his official record. But his plan was to make a living playing the accordion, until the guy who was going to be his guitar player drowned swimming off base to see his girlfriend. So when he mustered out, Andrews put on the gloves instead of his squeezebox.

"I was a young guy and I needed money," he said, "and that was the fastest way I knew to make it."

He officially turned pro on July 14, 1952, beating Eddie Simms in a four-rounder, and for the next eight years, Andrews was a full-time prize fighter. That meant fighting as often as four times a month, and grabbing the chance when offered $1,800 to face Bobby Boyd on a few hours notice. It was Andrews' first main event, and he lasted into the seventh round. That was February 2, 1953, and when he faced his next name opponent seven months later, the busy Andrews had 11 more bouts under his belt and was more than ready for the spindly blond who was the darling of that early television era.

Chuck Davey had won four intercollegiate boxing championships while matriculating at Michigan State University, and hadn't lost as a pro until 147-pound champion Kid Gavilan flunked him in a February '53 title bout. Following a couple of comeback wins, Davey met Andrews in front of 11,089 fans at Veterans Memorial Park in Saginaw, and Andrews graduated with honors, dropping Davey in the second round and winning a unanimous 10-round decision. Two months later, in the first of more than 20 national TV appearances, Andrews repeated the victory over Davey in Detroit.

"I was just naturally fast," said Andrews. "Even in the amateurs, I could



In his first East Coast appearance, Andrews drew rave reviews after winning a 10-round decision over Joey Klein. Media critics were impressed with his blazing hand speed and non-stop style.

throw millions of punches where the other guy threw maybe two."

When the 22-year-old Andrews made his East Coast debut in January '54, beating Joey Klein at the Eastern Parkway Arena in Brooklyn for his 26th win in 31 fights, the New York City press was unusually extravagant in its praise.

"His hands work so fast, you can scarcely follow them," wrote Lester Bromberg in the *New York World Telegram-Sun*. "[Andrews] looked like a younger, slightly smaller version of Bobo Olson [the then-middleweight champion] in several respects. He was driving all the way, he hit accurately from the dog-gonest angles, he threw four or five punches when someone else might have stopped at one, and he shifted from head to body and back again."

"A throwback to the gay days of fisticuffs," enthused Caswell Adams of the *Journal-American*.

The '50s, however, weren't so gay for boxing. The sport was controlled by mobsters, led by Frankie Carbo, whose criminal record and misdeeds were the doleful subject of a long column in a Milwaukee newspaper a week before Andrews' next fight there, just two weeks after he crashed the Big Apple. A few days after criticizing writers around the country who still give their blessings to boxing and its gangster connections, the same Milwaukee columnist, Lloyd Larsen, wrote glowingly of the promoter and a nondescript local *paisano* named Ted Olla. The promoter's name was Frank Balistrieri, and, according to Larsen, he was a paragon of civic virtue, "a sucker for a left when the magic word charity was mentioned."

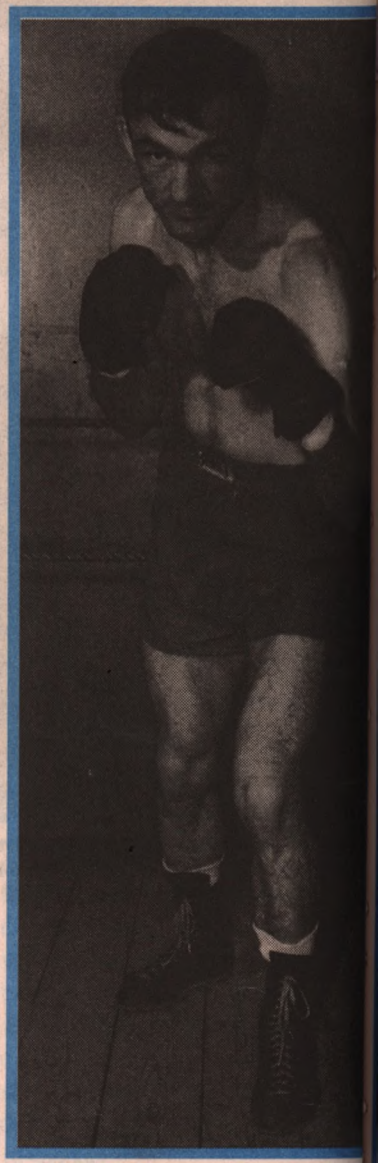
It turned out that Balistrieri was a little more than that, as Sen. Estes Kefauver told the U.S. Senate a few years later when he named him as a major Midwestern mafioso. Andrews wonders if that could have had something to do with what he calls the worst robbery ever committed against him in the ring.

"I never had an easier fight in my life," he said of his bout with Olla. "I don't think I got hit the whole fight."

Yet the judges gave Olla several 10-8 rounds, and a split decision after 12 rounds.

The unanimous verdict awarded European middleweight champion Gustav "Bubi" Scholz over Andrews at Madison Square Garden wasn't as rank, but Andrews thought he'd done enough to win against the first German citizen allowed to box in a Garden main event since before World War II. That was one of several unique aspects of the March '54 fight. It was the first national boxing broadc done in color, and Scholz was the fi main-eventer with an official understu waiting in the wings—Ralph "Tige Jones—because until the day of the bo there was the possibility that an injunct sought by George Gainford, who claim he had the American rights to Schol would keep the German out of the ring.

The draw announced after the May fight between Andrews and Joe Mic wasn't a big surprise to the crowd at t Indianapolis Coliseum nor anybody wait ing the nationally televised bout. That because the open scoring system favor by some today in the wake of th Holyfield-Lewis draw was used for t



Andrews claims that Hall of Famer Car Basilio was the toughest man he ever fou Somehow, Andrews survived a terrific beat to last the distance with the future welterwe and middleweight champion.

fight, with referee Tony Zale, the ex-middleweight champion, getting the scores from the judges between rounds and handing them over to be broadcast in the arena and over the airways.

Andrews has no kick about the unanimous decision against him a month later when he met welterweight and middleweight champion-to-be Carmen Basilio.

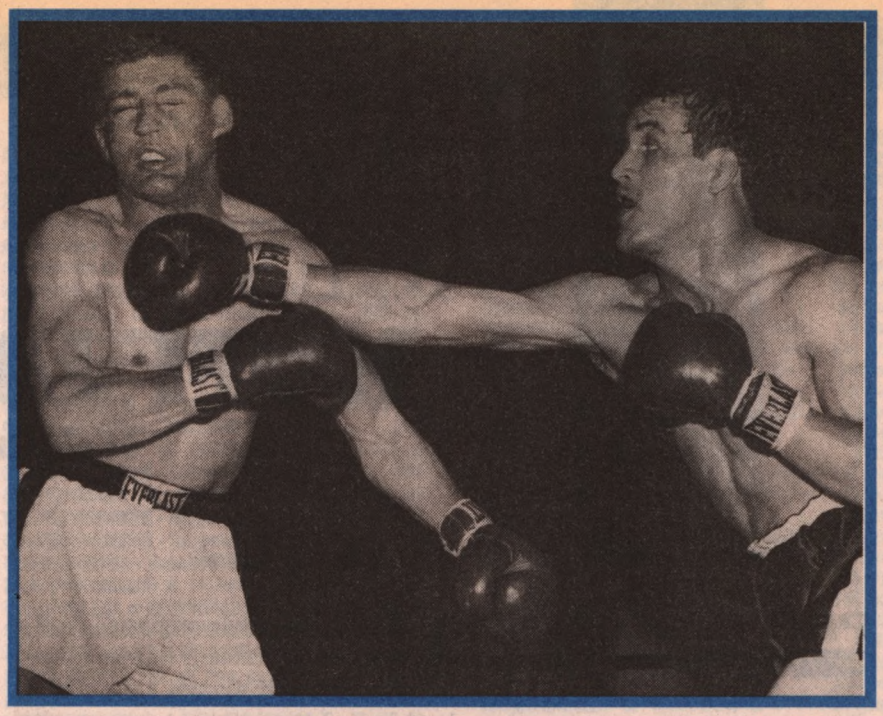
"Davey beat him in Chicago, and I beat Davey twice, so I figured I could take him," said Andrews. "But *whooo*, could he hit! He had me down twice in the seventh. Nobody else ever hit me that hard."

"How Al weathered that round is a mystery," wrote Billy Shaw in THE RING. "He took a fearful lambasting, but refused to quit."

"Basilio was a one helluva fighter, the toughest I ever fought," said Andrews. "But anybody who can beat Ray Robinson has to be a helluva fighter."

After bouncing back with decision wins over Sauveur Chiocco and George Johnson, seventh-ranked Andrews' chin was tested by Philadelphia's Gil Turner in what was called "one of the most bruising brawls in several years at Chicago Stadium."

Turner, the third-ranked welterweight contender, seemed to have Andrews going several times in the course of the 10-rounder, but according to the Associated Press account, "Andrews' staying power and his rallies, after he appeared almost out on his feet, must've thrilled the national TV audience. The Wisconsin wildcat, his face bleeding and his mouthpiece knocked out, made a great stand in the last round and had Turner rocking and giving ground. Then Turner took his turn pounding Andrews, and both were dazed at the bell."



Andrews, renowned for his ability to take punishment, takes a right hand from Corsica's Sauveur Chiocca. Undaunted, Andrews shook off the shot and boxed his way to a 10-round decision victory.

Turner won the decision, and they made him a 9-5 favorite in the September '54 rematch. But had it been known how serious Andrews was about it, the odds might have shifted dramatically.

"The big change for the second one was that I threw my cigarettes away for a month before it," said Andrews.

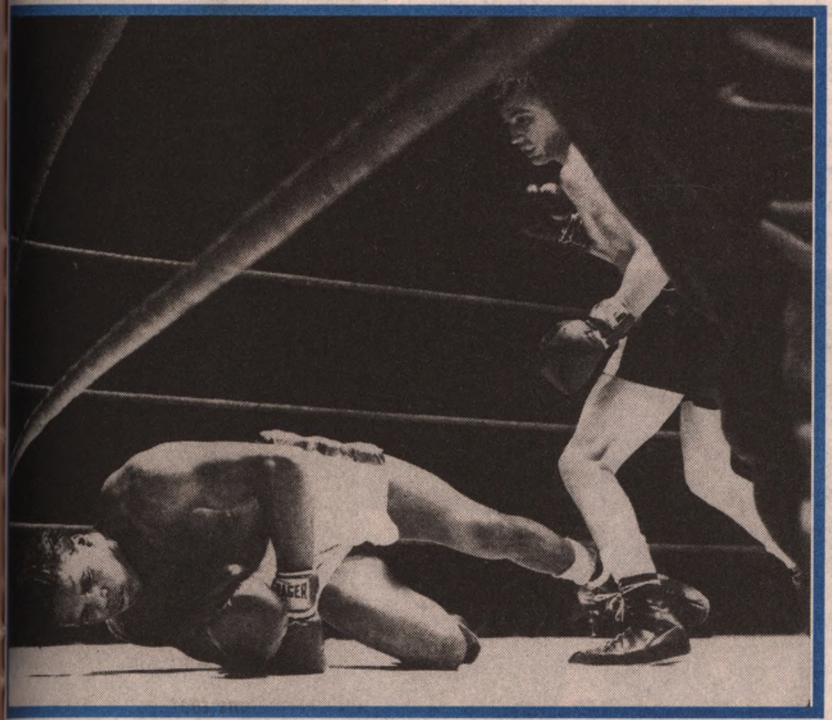
It doesn't sound so tough, but anyone ever hooked on the weed knows better. And Andrews was a thoroughly addicted smoker who smoked up to two packs of cigarettes a day. "Maybe on the day of a fight I cut down to half a pack," said Andrews. It's a wonder he didn't light up between rounds. It was the first thing he always did when he got back to his dressing room. Abstaining for a month was harder than getting through that seventh round against Basilio.

"It pretty near killed me," said Andrews. "I really suffered. I got so much pressure in my body, I couldn't believe it."

The results were a little frightening. Especially for Turner.

"Everything I done before, it seemed like I was twice as good at it," Andrews recalled. Including punching. Up until then, only three of his 29 victims had not

(Continued on page 78)



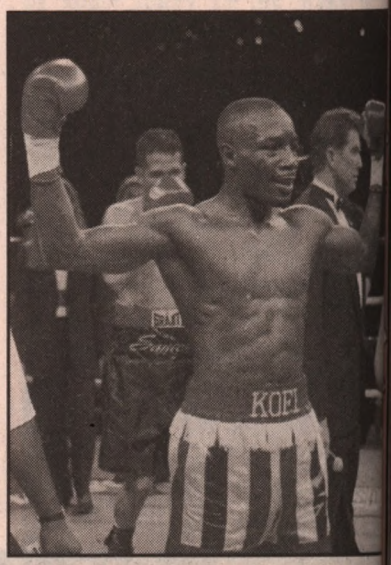
After giving up smoking cigarettes for a month, Andrews tallied the biggest and most spectacular triumph of his career, knocking Gil Turner cold in the third round of their second fight. Turner had won a close decision over 10 rounds the first time.

NEW FACES

KOFI JANTUAH

Welterweight

By Joe Santoliquito



His fighting style originated on the streets of Kumasi, Ghana, a place where every day was a test of manhood for Kofi Jantuah while he was growing up. He even has the battle scar to prove it. When he was a 15-year-old streetfighter in Kumasi, Jantuah was hit on the back of the head with a rock. Blood splattered everywhere, but Jantuah thought of only one thing: retaliation.

He chased down the 20-year-old culprit, caught him from behind, and beat him several times with the same rock he was struck with minutes ago. It was then Jantuah realized he passed *his* test of manhood. Bleeding and dazed, he reacted viciously, the way his father taught him to do in such a situation.

That fierceness comes out every time Jantuah steps in the ring. Despite a limited six-bout amateur career, he's risen rapidly up the welterweight class, winning the British Commonwealth title in 1997 with a first-round knockout of Stefan Scriggins. His most impressive victory to date, however, was a fifth-round knockout of previously undefeated Puerto Rican southpaw Daniel Santos-Pena, a bronze medalist at the 1996 Atlanta Games. The win over Santos-Pena

(Continued on page 7)

PRO RECORD

1994		
April 30	Sam Okromah, Accra, Ghana	W 8
Nov. 5	Sam Okromah, Accra	W 12
1995		
Feb. 25	Marciano Commey, Accra	W 12
1996		
Sept. 30	George Ahlidza, Accra	KO 8
Nov. 30	Abraham Tetteh, Accra	No-Contest 10
Dec. 28	Adona Zeba, Accra	KO 2
1997		
Nov. 1	Stefan Scriggins, Accra	KO 1
1998		
July 31	Babaloa Johnson, Accra	KO 2
Nov. 13	Emiliano Valdez, Miami, FL	W 6
Dec. 11	Daniel Mendez, Pueblo, CO	W 6
1999		
Jan. 9	Santiago Samaniego, Las Vegas	W 10
March 6	Gilbert Eastman, London	KO 11
May 7	Daniel Santos-Pena, Las Vegas	KO 5

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DREW	NO-CONTEST	KOs
13	12	0	0	1	6

Jantuah en route to upset kayo of Santos-Pena

Photos by Chris Farina

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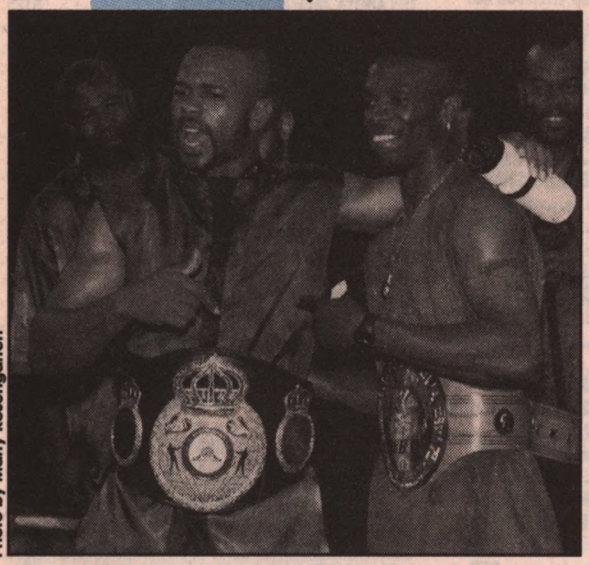
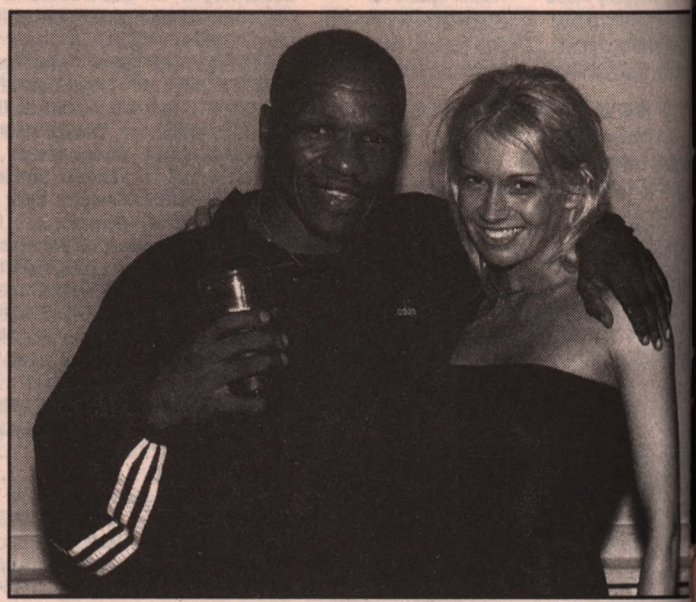


Photo by Marty Rosengarten

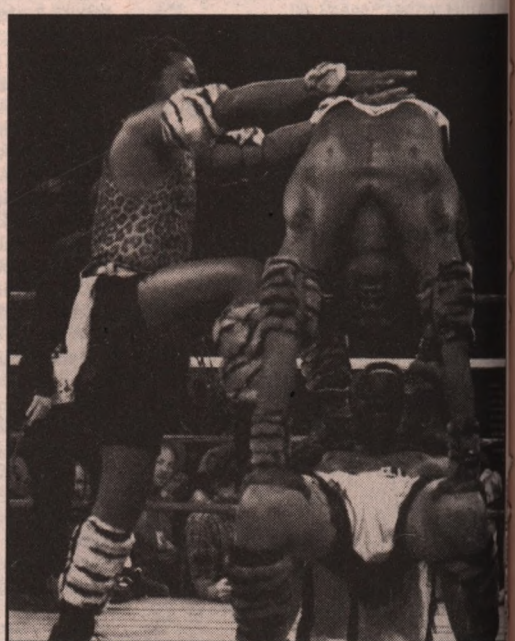
We've all heard the term "uncrowned champion," but in this photo, Derrick "Smoke" Gainer gives birth to the idea of a "crowned unchampion." Gainer was denied an opportunity to win a world title when Roberto Garcia pulled out of their June 5 fight, but Roy Jones, Smoke's buddy, has more than enough belts to go around.



Even prettier than "Pretty Boy": Floyd Mayweather poses with his latest protege, undefeated female fighter Pamela Barker. Mayweather's son, the WBC super featherweight champion of the same name, is definitely going to have to work a little harder to get his old man's attention with Barker around.

Photo by Teddy Blackburn

The Ivy League has too much academic integrity to give out athletic scholarships, but apparently they don't mind handing honorary degrees to ultra-famous athletes. Three-time heavyweight champ Muhammad Ali, flanked by National Basketball Association Commissioner David Stern, received a Doctorate of Law from Columbia University at their graduation ceremony this May.



The Ring's latest contest: In 50 words or less, tell us what the hell is going on in this photo. Whatever it was, it served as some sort of between-bouts entertainment during the Oscar De La Hoya-Oba Carr show in Las Vegas.

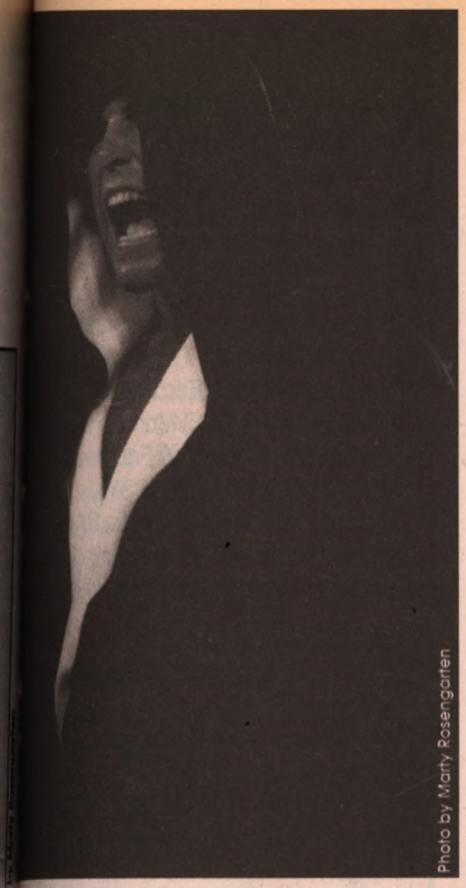
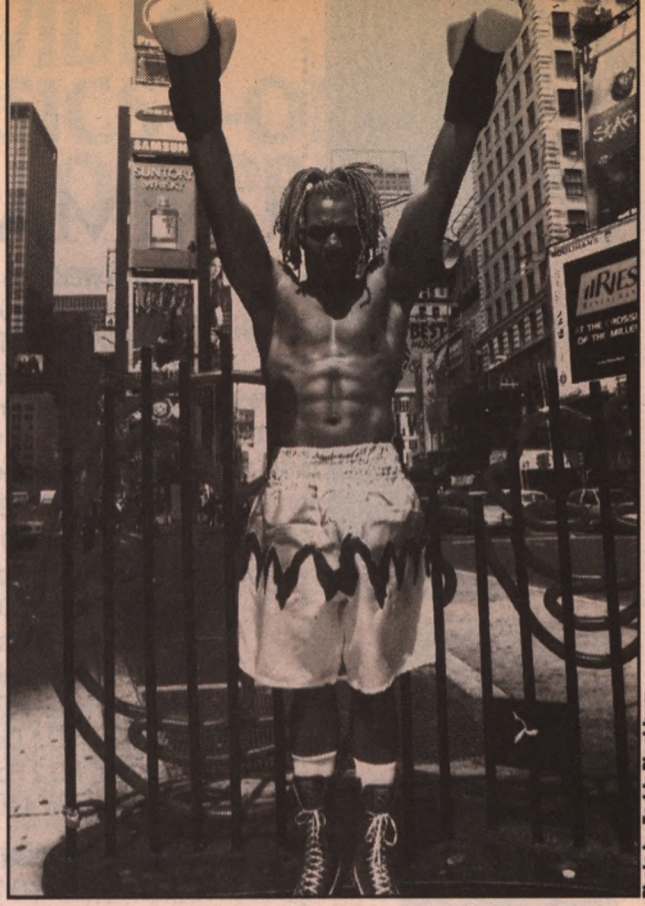


Photo by Marty Rosengarten

For all you ladies who dream about what Oscar De La Hoya looks like first thing in the morning, here's a reasonable facsimile. "The Golden Boy" is seen here in something akin to a bathrobe, and he looks like he's letting out a yawn. If you're interested in cooking him breakfast, you should know he takes his eggs raw.

Up, up, and away: Heavyweight contender Shannon Briggs takes to the streets of New York to demonstrate the pose he strikes before flying out of fight contracts at the last minute.



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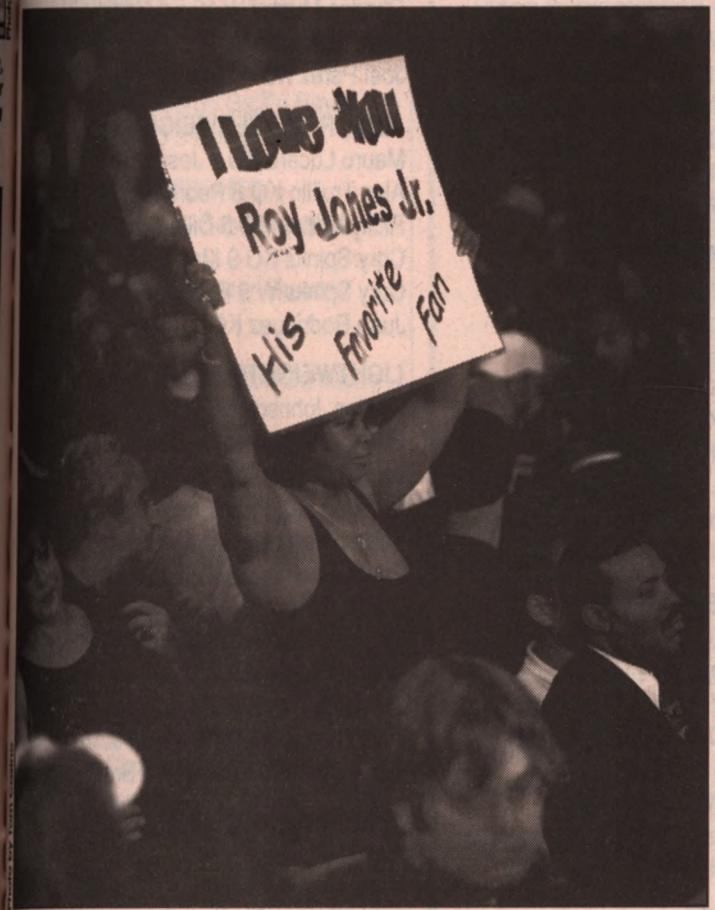
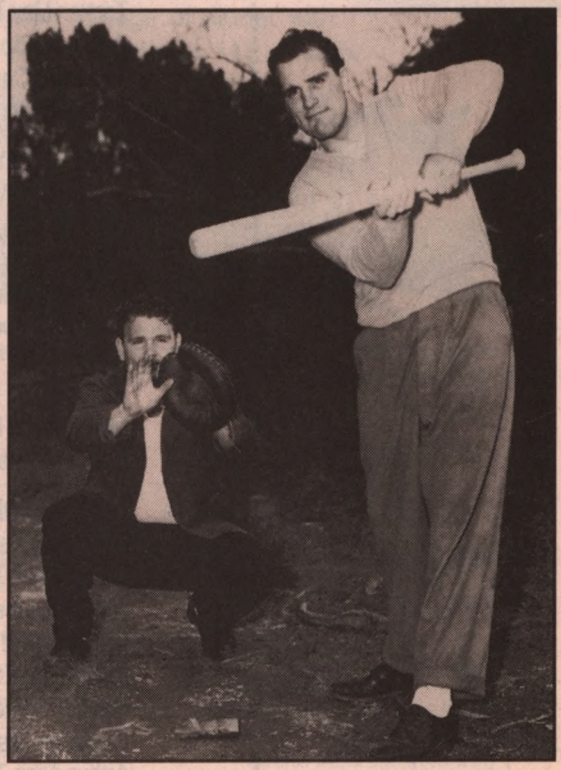


Apparently, De La Hoya's not the only fighter who can whip the female fans into a frenzy. This admirer has dubbed herself Roy Jones' "favorite fan," though we weren't able to get confirmation on that from the light heavyweight champ.

NOSTALGIA CORNER



Light heavyweight great Billy Conn failed in his bids to unseat Joe Louis as heavyweight champion, so "The Pittsburgh Kid" settled for unseating Pete Rose as the champion of choking up on the bat. Geez, Billy, a couple more inches and you're just plain holding it upside-down.

SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Chris Byrd KO 3 Jose Ribalta
David Izon KO 5 Terrance Lewis
John Ruiz KO 7 Fernely Feliz
Larry Donald Tech. Win 5 Marion Wilson
Derrick Jefferson W 12 Obed Sullivan
Lamon Brewster KO 2 Mario Cawley
Oleg Maskaev KO 2 Shane Sutcliffe
Darroll Wilson KO 2 Don Normand
Wladimir Klitschko KO 1 Tony LaRosa
Razor Ruddock KO 1 Derek Amos
Joe Bugner W Disq. 9 Levi Billups
Jorge Luis Gonzalez KO 3 Alex Stewart
Maurice Harris KO 1 Louis Monaco
Gary Bell KO 1 Dino Salcedo
Joe Mesi KO 2 Rohan Wallace
Butterbean W 4 Russell Chasteen

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Vassiliy Jirov KO 7 Arthur Williams
(Wins IBF Title)
Johnny Nelson W 12 Bruce Scott
Dale Brown W 12 Sajad Abdul-Aziz
Torsten May Tech. Win 9 Adolpho Washington
Jorge Castro KO 5 Miguel Angel Robledo
Vincenzo Cantatore KO 3 Terry Ray
Rob Calloway W 8 Nathaniel Williams

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Roy Jones W 12 Reggie Johnson
(Unifies Title)
Eric Harding KO 5 Pascal David
Montell Griffin KO 5 Danny Thomas
Antonio Tarver KO 5 Jerry Lee Williams
Greg Wright W 12 Glenn Robinson
Richard Hall KO 2 Fabian Garcia
Miguel Angel Robledo W 10 Fabian Chancalay
Lincoln Carter W 10 Tyrone Armstead

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Byron Mitchell KO 11 Frankie Liles
(Wins WBA Title)
Joe Calzaghe W 12 Rick Thornberry
Bruno Girard KO 8 Jurgen Hartenstein
Eric Lucas KO 5 Laverne Clark
Randie Carver W 12 Bo James
Yoshinori Nishizawa W 12 Yongsuk Choi
Arthur Allen Tech. Win 7 Steve Fisher

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Giovanni Pretorius KO 2 Ernie Alesna
Bert Schenk W 12 Jose Ramon Medina-Padilla
Davey Hilton KO 3 Stephane Ouellet
Dana Rosenblatt W 10 Lloyd Bryan
Syd Vanderpool KO 7 Mario Iribarren
Urbano Gurrola KO 1 Julio Almazon
Erland Bettare W 12 Alexander Zaitsev
Howard Eastman KO 6 Roman Babaev
Michael Lerma KO 2 Ronnie Johnson

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Quirino Garcia W 12 Simon Brown
Mamadou Thiam KO 7 Orhan Delibas
Paul Samuels KO 9 Eric Holland
Andrei Pestriaev KO 2 Montero Ramirez
Roger Mayweather W 10 Francisco Merc
Rafael Pineda KO 12 Jairo Siris
Leonard Townsend KO 3 Mike Bryan
Anthony Farnell KO 6 John Long
Hercules Kyvelos KO 2 Mathias Bedbur

WELTERWEIGHTS
Oscar De La Hoya KO 11 Oba Carr
(Retains WBC Title)
Felix Trinidad KO 4 Hugo Pineda
(Retains IBF Title)
Raul Frank KO 6 Alex Lubo
Michele Piccirillo W 12 Juan Coggi
Livingstone Bramble KO 2 Paul Nave
Charles Murray W 10 Ed Griffin
Joey Gamache W 10 John Bailey
Joel Perez KO 4 Mauricio Rodriguez

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
Mauro Lucero KO 4 Jesus Rodriguez
Alex Trujillo KO 6 Pedro Alonso
Ricky Hatton KO 5 Dillon Carew
Cory Spinks KO 9 Mark Hammon
Cory Spinks W 8 Rodolfo Gomez
Juan Rodriguez KO 1 Juan Lopez

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Golden Johnson KO 4 Miguel Arrozal
Billy Irwin KO 2 John Lark
James Crayton KO 9 Jorge Luis Lopez
Ramon Ledon KO 1 Fred Mutuweta
Eduardo Morales W 10 Victor Hugo Paz
Edwin Santana D 10 Richie Kiley
Carlos Gerena W 8 Angel Aldama
Michael Ayers KO 3 Mkhuseli Kondile
Bobby Vanzie KO 10 Athanus Nzau
Jermaine Fields KO 4 Eugene Johnson
Julio Chacon KO 4 Mauricio Julio
Daniel Attah KO 2 Kareem Braithwaite

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
Floyd Mayweather KO 9 Justin Juuko
(Retains WBC Title)
Jesus Chavez W 12 Julio Alvarez
Derrick Gainer KO 6 Donovan Carey
Hector Lizarraga W 10 Sergio Macias

Remigio Molina W Disq. 3 Sergio Lauria
Antonio Ramirez W 12 Julio Sanchez-Leon
Hengo Nagashima W 12 Dooyul Lee
Daniel Rodriguez W 10 Sergio Sanchez
Richie Wenton W 6 Peter Buckley

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Freddie Norwood W 12 Antonio Cermeno
(Regains WBA Title)
Kena Konadu W 10 Hector Acero-Sanchez
Orlando Canizales KO 6 Richard DeJesus
Reymante Jamili KO 4 Chris Wuritimur
Istvan Kovacs W 12 Nabaloum Dramane
Jose Rojas KO 5 Ever Beleno
Roque Cassiani W 10 Jose Portillo
Kyoshiro Fukushima W 10
Chamokpet Singwancha
Michael Gomez KO 2 Nigel Leake
Daniel Seda KO 8 Pasqual Rouse

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
Lehlo Ledwaba W 12 John Michael Johnson
(Wins Vacant IBF Title)
Danny Romero D 10 Enrique Jupiter
Ernesto Grey W 10 Edinson Valencia
Harold Grey KO 4 Antonio Osorio

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Veerapol Sahaprom KO 5 Mauro Blanc
(Retains WBC Title)
Adan Vargas KO 1 Jorge Gallito Reyes
Keiji Yamaguchi KO 3 Dowoon Ra

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS
In Joo Cho KO 8 Pone Saengmorakot
(Retains WBC Title)
Gerry Penalosa KO 2 Ramon Hurtado

FLYWEIGHTS
Leo Gamez KO 8 Josue Dickie Camacho
(Retains WBA Title)
Melchor Cob Castro W 10 Ricardo Martinez
Alex Sanchez W 10 Lorenzo Trejo
Isidro Garcia KO 11 Antonio Ruiz
Peter Culshaw KO 9 Adrian Ochoa
Mike Trejo KO 3 Neddy Garcia
Keith Knox KO 6 Damaen Kelly
Yeosam Choi KO 1 Rolando Baclayo
Melvin Magramo KO 10 Katsuhiro Akita

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS
Melchor Cob Castro KO 6 Dionisio May
Hidenobu Honda KO 3 Kazumasa Ohtani
Daniel Reyes KO 2 Gustavo Vera

STRAWWEIGHTS
Zolani Petelo KO 1 Eric Jamili
(Retains IBF Title)
Lindi Memani KO 2 Dennis Sabsal

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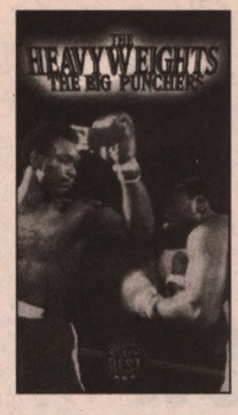

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RINGSIDE REPORTS

FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

Carlos "Bolillo" Gonzalez got his nickname several years ago from a type of pale Mexican pastry roll to which his complexion was once likened. But if there's a Mexican word for a cream puff, Gonzalez may now want to think about changing his moniker to that, since that's exactly what the well-regarded veteran was made to look like by the virtually unknown Bailey on May 15 in Miami.

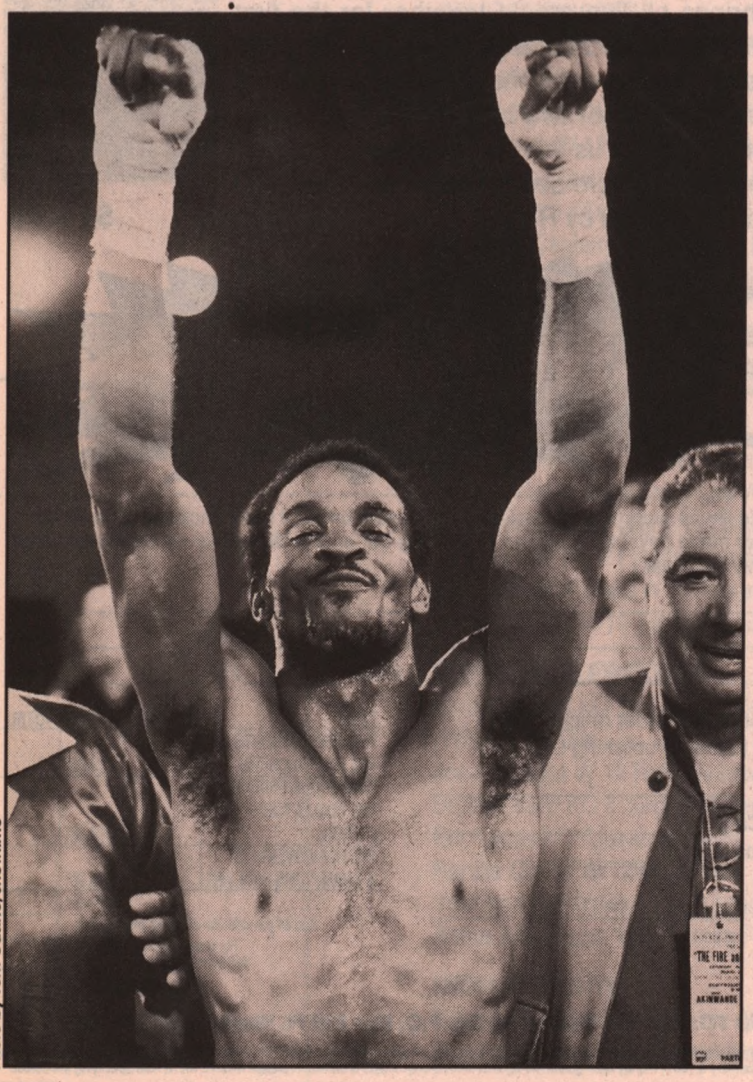


Photo by Tom Casino/Showtime

Bailey, who has knocked out all 19 of his professional opponents—including 13 in the first round—was thought to be getting in a little over his head against Gonzalez, the first recognizable name on his resume. But it didn't take long to discover that it was Gonzalez, 48-4-1 (42), who didn't belong, as Bailey thrilled his hometown crowd at the Jai Alai Fronton by devouring Bolillo in just 41 seconds with a single, devastating left hook. We'd heard rumors about Bailey's speed and power, but nobody was sure how they would translate against a world-class opponent. Watching Gonzalez lie on the canvas for several minutes gave us all the answer we needed.

The junior welterweight division was already teeming with excellent prospects like Zab Judah and Antonio Diaz, but the 24-year-old Bailey may have surpassed both of them with his first-round kayo of Gonzalez. If Bailey's impressive knockout roll continues, we may soon be calling *him* "Bolillo."

• • • •

Randall Bailey

Morales spears Ramirez with a stiff jab

Erik Morales KO 9 Juan Carlos Ramirez

Las Vegas, Nevada: Undefeated Morales mixed superb conditioning with superior punching power, knocking down super gutsy Ramirez four times en route to retaining the WBC super bantamweight crown on a ninth-round TKO at the Las Vegas Hilton hotel-casino.

Morales, 121½, Tijuana, Mexico, needed to draw upon deeper stamina than usual since Ramirez, 122, Juarez, Mexico, never stopped pressing forward, looking round after round like the best catcher since Johnny Bench. As a 7-1 underdog, Ramirez was a worthy replacement for the injured Wayne McCullough, and he never hesitated in beating the count of referee Jay Nady (USA) after being down once in the second round, twice in the third, and again in the ninth.

Morales, 22, earning $100,000 while improving to 33-0 (27), outpunched Ramirez, 22, on a ratio of 4-1 in nearly every round. It was a right hand that dropped Ramirez late in the second round. The same punch twice created short knockdowns in the third, and Morales' heaviest bombardment came in the ninth, when no less than 12 TNT shots put Ramirez begrudgingly back on the canvas. The challenger beat Nady's count, but this time Ramirez was walking sideways going back to his corner.

Nady conferred with ringside physician Dr. William Berliner on Ramirez' condition and wisely decided not to let the fighter come out for the 10th round. The decision was roundly booed by spectators, but Ramirez just didn't have the kind of one-punch knockout power to make Nady's stoppage arguable.

"There's no question about it, I had to stop it because of the accumulation of so many hard head punches," Nady reflected. "Ramirez was very brave, but he had taken enough, even if he didn't know it."

In the official scoring, Dalby Shirley (USA) and David Chung (Korea) had it 90-76 and 90-77 for Morales, while Jerry Roth (USA) voted 89-78, giving the well-hammered Ramirez the fourth round. THE RING's tally was 90-76 for the champion.

It was Morales' sixth defense since winning the title from Daniel Zaragoza in 1997. For "Ranchero" Ramirez, 17-2 (7), it was his second impressive defeat in a title fight, as his only other loss was a controversial technical split-decision defeat to then-WBC featherweight champion Luisito Espinosa in August '98. Morales was gracious in lauding Ramirez for his hard stand even though the ambitious challenger had been warned three times by Nady for being careless with his head in the trench warfare.

"I wished they had stopped it earlier," Morales said. "That boy is very courageous, but he sure took a lot of very hard punches. I had to be very careful because Ramirez kept coming in with his head down. Ramirez had lots of guts, but he took a pretty bad beating. Man, does Ramirez have a chin or what?"

Ramirez impressed Bob Arum with his honest effort, causing the promoter to declare, "Juan is a tremendous boxer. He could be getting another shot at somebody's title later this summer."

It's a virtual cinch that whoever Ramirez fights next, Top Rank will be rewarding the rugged Mexican with a larger purse than the paltry $8,000 he received to face Morales, now Arum's number-three box office attraction behind WBC welterweight champion Oscar De La Hoya and WBC super featherweight king Floyd Mayweather.

Television: TVKO
Promoter: Top Rank
(5-8-99)
Jack Welsh

Garza battles through a Barreto left

Photo by Chris Farina

Nestor Garza KO 8 Carlos Barreto

Las Vegas, Nevada: When 1996 Olympians Floyd Mayweather, Fernando Vargas, and David Reid challenged for world titles less than 20 fights into their pro careers, many people predicted they would be unsuccessful because their inexperience would somehow catch up with them. In all three cases, it didn't. But for Barreto, Venezuela's bantamweight representative in the '96 Games, the greenness of having only 13 pro fights proved a disadvantage in his first title try. Though he may have been the more talented fighter, Barreto's shortcomings were exploited by WBA super bantam champion Garza, who stopped him in eight.

Through 6½ rounds, though, Barreto looked like a shoo-in to make Garza's first defense of the title he won from Enrique Sanchez last December his last. With a five-inch height advantage and seven inches in reach on Garza, Barreto was able to outbox the Mexican no matter what the titlist tried. From the first round, Garza, 121, had to work harder to get within range, and the difficulty he would have became clear when Barreto, 121, stunned him with a quick, precise counter left uppercut to thwart an advance in the second. A swelling began to form under the 22-year-old Garza's left eye in the third, and by the end of the fourth, Barreto was firmly in command.

Though Barreto, 22, continued to control the action and pile up points with his sharp jab and stiff overhand right, Garza made a strategy alteration in the fifth that would later pay dividends. The champion began digging to the body, and Barreto started to clinch on occasion. Still, when Garza tried to get a brawl going in the sixth, the versatile Barreto dominated most of the trading.

But the bodyshots and the challenger's inexperience combined to take their toll in the seventh. Barreto was suddenly exhausted, having not paced himself wisely, perhaps having engaged Garza in too many energetic punchouts the previous round. Barreto beg clinching incessantly over the l ter half of the round, and then tri to pull Garza down to buy himse some time early in the eight Garza quickly pounced on hi spent opponent, landing a treme dous left-right combinatio Barreto didn't have the strength keep Garza away anymore, a with the challenger being pound unmercifully along the ropes wi one flurry after another but refu ing to go down, referee Mitc Halpern (USA) had no choice b to stop the contest at 2:00 of th eighth.

The previously unbeate Barreto, who outpointed Hect Acero-Sanchez last October t earn the title shot, fell to 12-1- (9). Garza, 36-1 (28), may be ma ing his next defense against ultr tough countryman Juan Carl Ramirez, who gave Erik Morales a hard time before falling in nin on the same card.

Television: TVKO
Promoter: Top Rank
(5-8-99)

Sven Ottke W 12 Gabriel Hernandez

Duesseldorf, Germany: About the only thing to emerg enhanced from this nondescript spectacle was Ottke's reputation as a non-puncher. He may be unbeaten in 15 fights and he may hold the IBF super middleweight title, but he has stopped only two opponents in his professional career and gives the impression that he fears breaking his hands on his opponent's jaw.

Ottke's salvation is that he can box. The 31-year-old German had 330 bouts as an amateur, and his fleet movement and rapid delivery of punches frustrates and confuses opponents. It was his ability to w bewilder Philadelphian Charles Brewer that contributed most to his shock title-winning effort last October. And if Brewer could be so handled by the German, what chance had the obscure Hernandez?

Hernandez, 25, brought an unbeaten record to the ring at Philips Halle, but little else. His jab was sharp, but he proved one-dimensional and, crucially, lacked the power to put the champion under pressure.

Round after round rolled into one laborious exhibition. Ottke, 167, was able to control the pace as he liked. Hernandez, 167½, Dominican Republic, was himself nimble on his feet, but he did nothing to unsettle his opponent. With the jab alone, Ottke, 15-0 (2), built up a substantial lead, embellished by rapid-fire combinations that stalled the challenger, but never shook him. Hernandez, 13-1-2 (8), perhaps won two of the rounds, but no more, and at the finish, the lopsided nature of the result was inevitable. The bout was scored 118-110 by two judges and 119-109 by the third. The referee was Tom Williams (USA).

Having now made two successful defenses, Ottke's reign may not be extended much farther. His mandatory challenger is Thomas Tate, who lost a 12-round decision to Julian Jackson for the WBC middleweight title in 1992 and two years later was blown out in two rounds by then-IBF middleweight champion Roy Jones. But he has been resuscitated with wins over Demetrius Davis, Merqui Sosa, and previously unbeaten Anwar Oshana, and is likely to be Ottke's next opponent in September. There's a chance, however, that the mandatory will be delayed, as promoter Wilfred Sauerland has been talking up a unification bout between Ottke and WBC titleholder Richie Woodhall, the prospect of which is enough to send anyone to sleep even if neither would be likely to do that to the other.

(5-8-99)

Brian Doogan

Freddie Norwood W 12 Antonio Cermeno

San Juan, Puerto Rico: Norwood, who bills himself as "Li'l Hagler" and sports a shaved head to emphasize the point, came into the ring at Roberto Clemente Coliseum intent on winning back from Cermeno what he had never really lost to anyone—the WBA featherweight title. He succeeded, but it wasn't pretty to watch.

In fact, it was pretty awful to watch unless you like wrestling.

"I told Norwood's promoter [Bob Arum] they should put him on a boat, take him out to sea, and leave him there," said longtime trainer and fight analyst Gil Clancy, who was at ringside, after Norwood, 29, won a split decision. "That was as bad a title fight as I've ever seen."

Norwood, 34-0-1 (20), first claimed the vacant 126-pound championship against Cermeno, winning a unanimous 12-round decision from the awkward and often rule-bending Venezuelan 13 months earlier. But after defending the title twice, Norwood went to Japan last October ill-prepared to fight after a string of personal problems briefly landed him in a California jail last September, and he weighed in 1½ pounds over the limit. Unable to lose the final 24 ounces in time, Norwood was still allowed to fight, but when he stopped Koji Matsumoto in the 10th round, the WBA vacated the title, and Cermeno won it back not long thereafter.

But Cermeno, 35-3 (23), fought the rematch with Norwood like a man not much interested in remaining a champion. He seldom punched above the belt until late in the fight and spent so much time holding the shorter Norwood behind the head and pushing him down that he finally had a point deducted by referee Luis Pabon (Puerto Rico) in the eighth round for his tactics. Norwood grew increasingly frustrated at regularly being hit low (a half-dozen times), pushed to the floor (four times), and held so often the two appeared to be dance partners rather than warring parties. And those mounting frustrations led Norwood to fall into an amateurish style himself as the fight wore on. More and more often, Norwood was unable to land more than a single punch before the champion would wrestle him into a clinch.

Cermeno's tactics soon led Norwood to lunge in wildly, trying to land any kind of a combination, and when he failed, he complained more and more to the referee and the crowd that he was being fouled. While he was right half the time, he soon became the little boy who cried wolf in the eyes of an increasingly displeased crowd of 8,156.

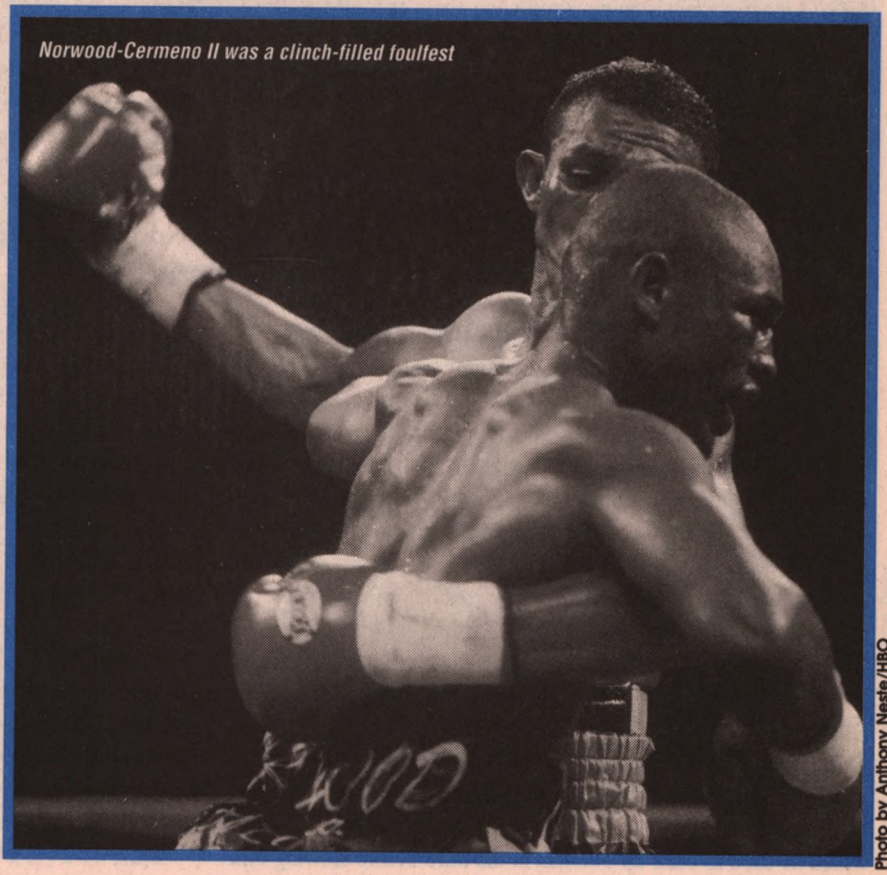
What few serious punches that landed mostly were thrown by the challenger from St. Louis, Missouri, until late in the fight, when the 30-year-old Cermeno, 125, appeared to wear Norwood, 125, down with his low blows and wrestling tactics, and finally began to tag the ex-champ. This forced Norwood to begin clinging like ivy himself, just as Cermeno had earlier, and the exasperated crowd grew so weary of watching that when ring announcer Jimmy Lennon bellowed, "This is the 12th and final round," the entire arena broke into raucous cheers.

Considering the way the fight went, that round didn't come soon enough, and when it was over, the Puerto Rican judges' cards reflected how difficult the fight had been to watch or score. Samuel Conde scored the fight 116-111 for Norwood, Cesar Ramos had it 116-112 for Cermeno, and Nelson Vasquez had Norwood a 116-115 winner, his margin that gave Norwood the title being the single deduction against Cermeno.

Promoter: Don King

(5-29-99)

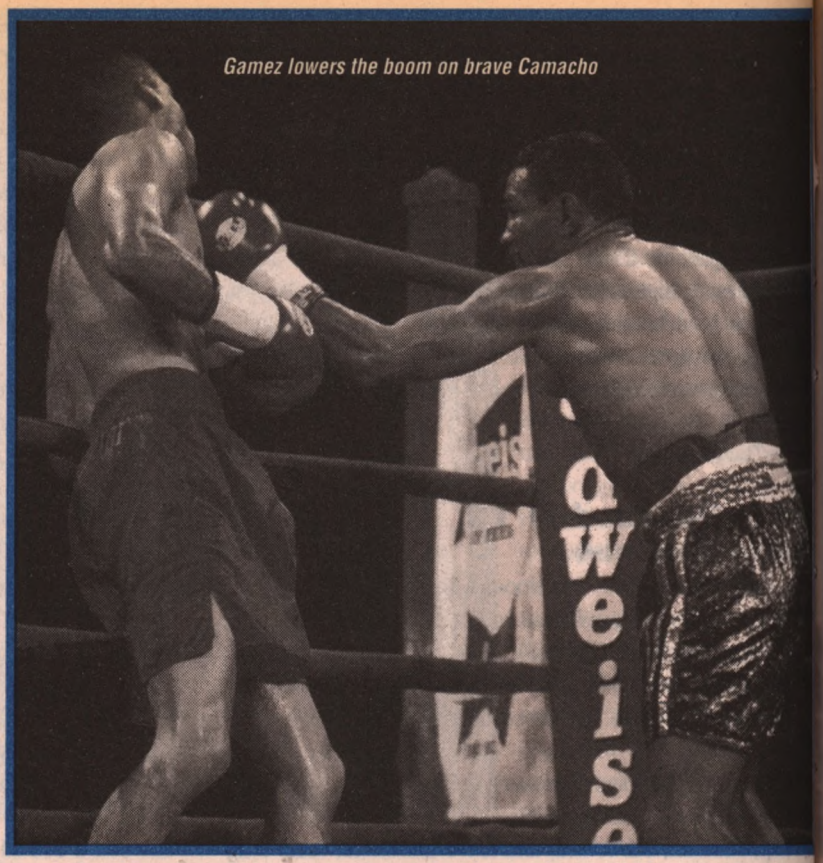
Ron Borges



Norwood-Cermeno II was a clinch-filled foulfest

Photo by Anthony Neste/HBO

Leo Gamez KO 8 Josue Dickie Camacho


Gamez lowers the boom on brave Camacho

San Juan, Puerto Rico: WBA flyweight champion Gamez gave native son Camacho a boxing lesson and a beating at Roberto Clemente Coliseum, hammering him most of the night before the bout was finally stopped at 2:06 of the eighth round with Camacho, 16-7 (6), draped on the turnbuckle in his corner and taking serious punishment without response.

Gamez, 32-6-1 (24), continually rocked the inexperienced and overmatched Camacho, who had fought only once since 1996 and had been knocked out in his final three fights before his three-year layoff began. The champion repeatedly drilled him with right hands over his low-slung defense, wobbling him several times, but never quite dropping him.

But whenever Camacho rallied even briefly, the partisan hometown crowd roared its approval. For a time, the fans' energy kept him upright and battling back gamely from the brink of defeat, but the Venezuelan champ finally overwhelmed him with one last barrage of punches midway through the eighth round. Stunned, Camacho fell back into the corner, and this time could find no escape route not blocked by Gamez' flying fists. It was then that referee Roberto Ramirez (Puerto Rico) jumped in and stopped the fight not a minute too soon (or a second too late), handing Gamez, 35, the victory at 2:06 of the round.

By then, Camacho, 30, wore the face of the brave but battered warrior, his eyes closing and his cheeks swollen and discolored. They were badges of courage, but they were also a swelling advertisement that sometimes in boxing, bravery can be overrated.

Promoter: Don King

(5-29-99)

Ron Borges

Antonio Diaz W 12 Marlon Thomas

Las Vegas, Nevada: "Tono" Diaz didn't get the knockout he wanted, but superior punching against Thomas produced a fifth-round knockdown that made the difference in a close 12-round decision at the All-American SportPark, the first local non-casino venue to present pro boxing.

Diaz, 140, Coachella, California, tried for a kayo to the final bell, while Thomas, 139½, Detroit, Michigan, nearly gained an upset by winning five of the last seven rounds on two scorecards of the Las Vegas judges. Patricia Jarman-Manning and Al Siciliano both had it 114-113 for Diaz, who earned a wider margin from Duane Ford at 116-111. THE RING's tab was 115-112 for Diaz.

Thomas, 26, on a roll of seven straight wins, frustrated the 22-year-old Diaz early with a dart-and-duck style enhanced by a snapping counter left hook. Diaz' best weapon was a solid right, which he used to back up Thomas in the third before slowing him late in the fourth with powerful digs to the body.

Referee Joe Cortez (USA) warned Thomas for a low blow early in round five. Less than a minute remained when Diaz caught Thomas flush on the jaw with a mean right. The durable Michigander dropped on his right side, but managed to beat Cortez' count. Thomas took one more right before the bell.

Thomas came back to win the sixth and seventh rounds, but Diaz, bleeding from the nose and mouth, rolled out his biggest artillery in the eighth with a 12-punch salvo that backed Thomas into the ropes. It all started with an explosive right, and then three sets of combinations drove Thomas into a neutral corner. Though clearly stunned, he shook Diaz with a chopping left-right of his own at the bell.

"When Thomas hit me with a low blow, I got hissed off," Diaz said. "After I didn't take him out in the eighth round with all the shots I landed, I still figured I could get Thomas with one good right on the chin. I'll admit Thomas was strong and had some power. There were times when I shook him, but I didn't know if he was faking or not. Thomas was elusive. Every time I caught him with a shot to the body, he was gone."

Diaz' left eye was swelling by the 10th round, and with the scoring obviously close, it was all-out war in the final round. Both fighters were trying to land a one-punch kayo, and Diaz came much closer when he shook Thomas with a flush right hand.

Thomas was virtually unmarked at the finish and irate over the decision, noting Diaz was bleeding from the nose and mouth, had a swollen left eye, and hardly looked like a winner.

"Look at Diaz and look at me," Thomas said. "You may not have seen the punches land, but just look at his face and you'll see what my punches did."

Diaz, 27-2 (19), earned $17,500. Thomas, 18-4-1 (12), picked

$7,500 in his Nevada debut. In the punch stats, Thomas landed 115 of 561 punches thrown for a 24 percent connect rate, while Diaz was accurate with 129 of 592 for 22 percent.

Television: ESPN2

Promoter: Top Rank

(5-7-99)

Jack Welsh

Cesar Soto W 12 Luisito Espinosa

El Paso, Texas: In his second and possibly final try at a world title, tough veteran Soto fought the fight of his life and annexed the WBC featherweight crown from Espinosa with a stirring unanimous decision in the odd confines of the Equestrian Center on the grounds of the El Paso County Coliseum.

This was the second time Soto and Espinosa had squared off. The first time was in July 1996 in Manila, Philippines, when Espinosa captured a close decision over Soto before a huge gathering of his countryman. This time, however, the tables were turned, as Soto had the geographical advantage (El Paso borders Soto's hometown, Juarez, Mexico), even if it was before a relatively small sellout crowd of approximately 3,000.

When the bell rang, Soto, 126, didn't forget the agony of Manila. He went right after Espinosa, 126, intent on removing the judges from the equation. He rocked the champion with his first punch, a vicious left hook to the head, and continued on his blitzkrieg through the first seven rounds. Soto set a furious pace, and Espinosa had the look of a man who didn't know how to control the storm in front of him.

Soto, 26, came at Espinosa, who was making his eighth defense of a crown he won in '95, with everything in the early going—mostly lefts to the body and left-left combinations to the body and head—and even worked in the occasional smashing right hand, a punch he isn't known for. Espinosa's grunts and groans were painfully audible to ringsiders. For the first seven rounds, Soto was near perfection, a picture of controlled and focused fury, determined to prove the first fight was a robbery.

"I wanted to knock him out from the very first round," Soto said. "But then I hurt my left hand."

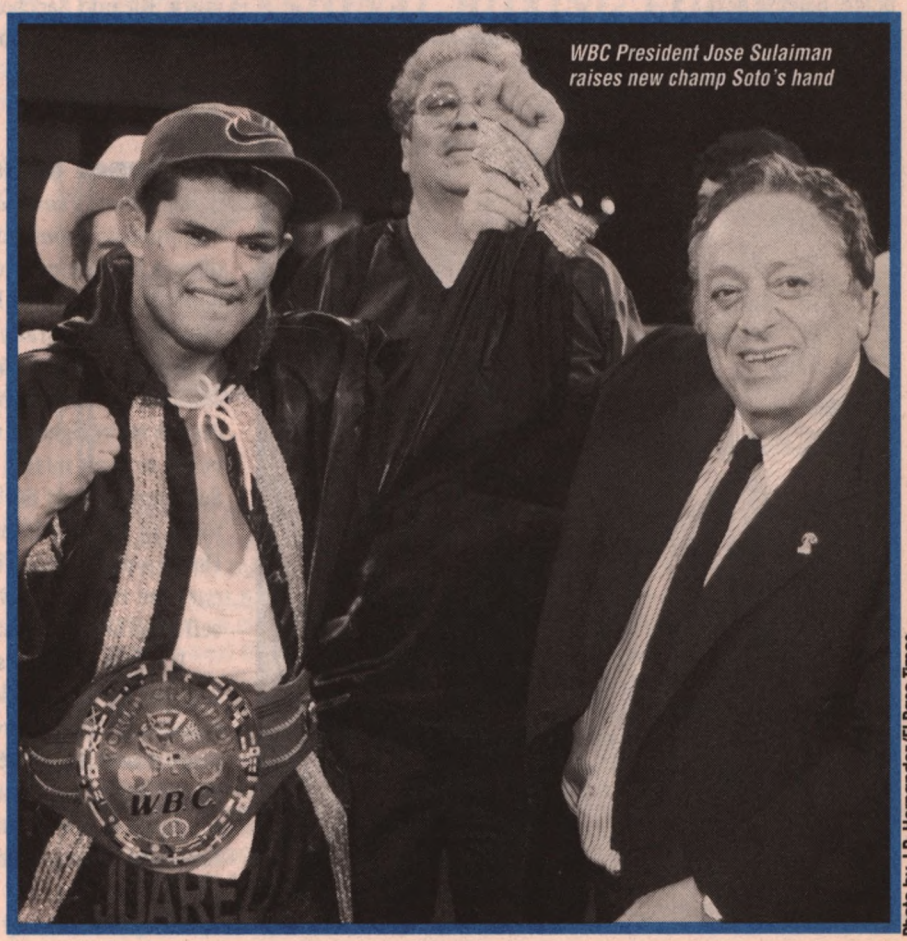
Somewhere around the third round, one of those vicious left hooks did as much damage to Soto's left hand as it was doing to Espinosa's ribcage. Espinosa, 31, tried to take advantage of Soto's injury, which turned out to be a sprain. In the eighth round, Espinosa began connecting with flashy combinations that didn't seem to have much power, but disrupted the slowing challenger all the same. By round 10, Soto was fighting on will alone, gritting his teeth every time he moved in to land that now-aching left hook. He continued to pursue, though Espinosa was connecting repeatedly with sharp flurries off the ropes.

Going into the final two rounds, there was some question as to whether the exhausted Soto could last. Espinosa, meanwhile, seemed fresh again, displaying an almost superhuman ability to absorb punishment and bounce back. Espinosa came out hard in the 12th, but it was Soto who landed the best punches of the round, a whistling left-right combination that staggered the champion. At the round's end, both abandoned technique and engaged in a 10-second shootout that had the crowd of 3,000 sounding like 30,000. The combatants reluctantly hugged at the bell.

Many ringsiders felt Espinosa's desperation rally was enough to pull it out, but the judges disagreed. In a complete reversal from their first fight, Soto had built too much of an early lead for Espinosa's late rally to overcome. Judge Terry Smith (USA) scored the fight 116-114, Chuck Williams (USA) scored it 115-114, and Gale Van Hoy (USA) scored it 116-115, all for Soto. THE RING scored it 117-112 for Soto.

"I won the last three rounds, and it was a hometown decision," Espinosa, 44-8 (23), said. "I felt I won the fight. My 10-year-old son could see that I won the fight. There will be a rematch, but not in El Paso. I will not fight in El Paso again."

As for a rematch, Soto, 53-7-2 (39), didn't seem overly eager to grant it to his rival. While a rematch could definitely get Soto a nice paycheck—especially in the Philippines—his more immediate concern was the money-man of the division, Prince Naseem Hamed. Top Rank began immediate negotiations for a September showdown with Hamed, though it appears a longshot. Bruce



WBC President Jose Sulaiman raises new champ Soto's hand

Photo by J.R. Hernandez/El Paso Times

Trampler, Top Rank's chief matchmaker, said Hamed will probably opt for a safer opponent.

"Soto hits very hard and he has a good chin," Trampler said. "So I don't know if Hamed will be that interested in fighting him."

The referee was Laurence Cole (USA).

Television: Univision

Promoter: Top Rank

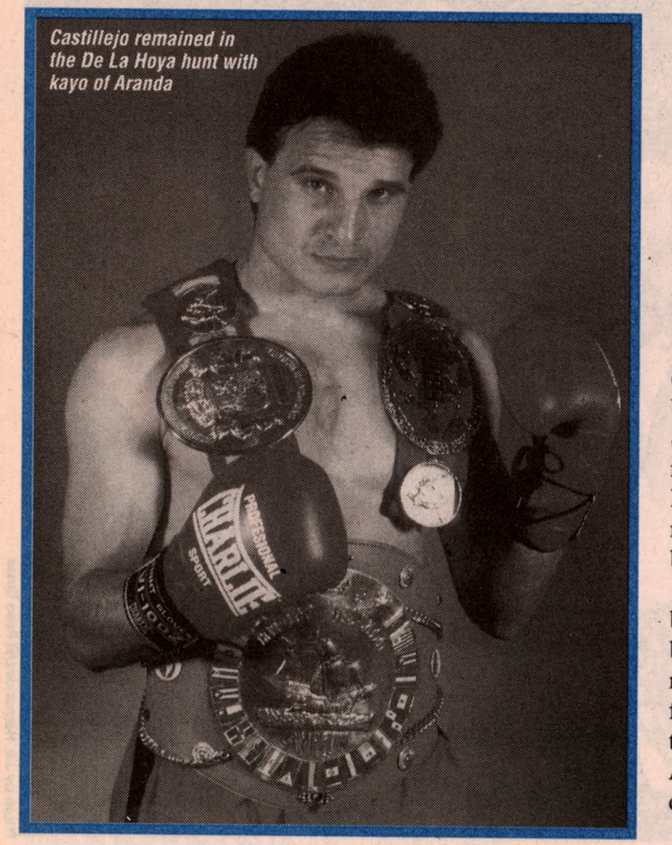
(5-15-99)

Matthew Aguilar

Francisco Castillejo KO 4 Humberto Aranda

Leganes, Spain: Having upset Keith Mullings to finally win a world championship, Castillejo, 154, Spain, was in no mood to let go of it against Caribbean champion Aranda, 154, Costa Rica, especially with the possibility of Oscar De La Hoya around the corner. Castillejo took the mediocre Aranda out with eight seconds remaining in the fourth to retain the WBC super welterweight title for the first time at the La Cubierta Bullring.

A cut over the challenger's left eye forced Mexican referee Guadalupe Garcia to intervene, though Castillejo, 45-4 (29), was on the verge of stopping Aranda anyway. He was hardly lacking incentive. Promoter Bob Arum is considering Castillejo as a possible opponent for "The Golden Boy" in December if the WBC welterweight champion gets past Felix Trinidad in their September unification bout. Castillejo's philosophy has to be to just keep on winning. He should. He will meet Swede Paulo Roberto in a voluntary defense next.



Castillejo remained in the De La Hoya hunt with kayo of Aranda

Following a circumspect opening round, Castillejo, 31, became more assertive, especially with his jab, in the second. Aranda, 33, slowed the champion's advancement with good movement and technique, but when the powerpunches began to flow in the third, he was emphatically outgunned.

He was game, however, landing a left hook to the ribs to start the third, but he was then hit by a hard left. It was a long, straight right that opened the cut, a wide, gaping wound that left the challenger with no alternative but to go for broke in the fourth. He got in a solid right uppercut, but the champion's heavier blows were taking a toll. Three consecutive right uppercuts by Castillejo put Aranda down. Aranda, 104 (4), rose bravely, but with a resigned look on his face. Soon after the referee broke the increasingly one-sided action and had the doctor inspect the cut. His assessment was not favorable, and the referee waved it over at 2:52 of round four.

"We are going to send a tape of this fight to Oscar De La Hoya to let him see the guy who will knock him out," said a rather optimistic Ricardo Sanchez Atocha, Castillejo's manager/trainer. It's doubtful that De La Hoya will lose much sleep because of it.

(5-14-99)

Brian Doogan

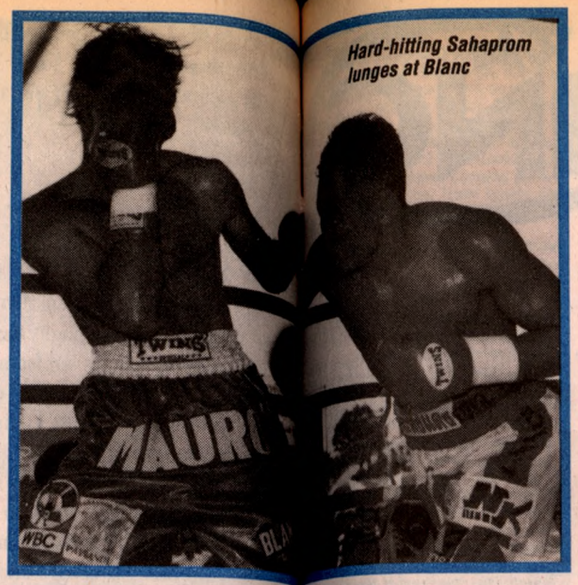
Veerapol Sahaprom KO 5 Mauro Blanc

Sara Buri, Thailand: Sahaprom (also known now as Veerapol Nakornluang-Promotion), 118, Thailand, kept the WBC bantam title, as he battered overmatched Blanc, 117½, Uruguay, dropped him twice, and halted him at 2:47 of the fifth round. The defending champ beautifully outjabbed the WBC's number-nine contender from the start, and the result was a terribly lopsided fight.

From the opening bell, Blanc, who was given his high ranking despite never fighting more than an eight-rounder, started circling busily to avert mixing it up with the aggressive, stalking champ. Sahaprom, a short but sturdy competitor, had Blanc reeling to the ropes in the fourth, and landed a solid left-right combination. Down went Blanc. The Uruguayan barely beat the count and retreated rapidly to avoid the champ's furious attack before the bell came to his rescue.

The fifth and fatal session saw Blanc hit the deck again, partly because he slipped down on the slippery canvas, but chiefly because he took a strong left from the champ. The challenger made it back up at the count of nine, but Sahaprom went all out for the finish, and whacked Blanc, 8-3-1 (2), with a strong right to the face. A towel quickly came fluttering in from the South American's corner, and referee Malcolm Bulner (Australia) waved off the contest.

Sahaprom, 22-1 (16), was making his first defense since he



Hard-hitting Sahaprom lunges at Blanc

dethroned Joichiro Tatsuyoshi in six rounds in Osaka, Japan, last December. He is scheduled to fight a rematch with Tatsuyoshi in Osaka in August, in what may be the Japanese ex-champion's swan song.

Promoter: Sahasombhop Srisonvongse

(5-21-99)

Joe Koizumi

Orlando Canizales KO 6 Richard DeJesus

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Canizales may only have a few months left before he finally retires, but in the meantime, the former IBF bantamweight champ seems intent on proving he still has some lightning in his legs and fists. A determined Canizales, Laredo, Texas, avenged last December's 10-round majority decision loss to DeJesus, Wilmington, Delaware, with a sparkling boxing display that forced DeJesus to quit on his stool after the sixth round.

Canizales, 50-4-1 (37), came out more aggressively than he did in the first meeting, firing a good, consistent jab. He avoided the smothering tactics of DeJesus, 14-6 (4), by staying in the center of the ring and occasionally dropping left hooks to the body that gradually wore down his less-experienced opponent.

The second round featured some of the better exchanges of the fight, as Canizales, 127½, kept up a steady diet of lefts to the body, while DeJesus, 124, countered with rights to the head. With less than 10 seconds left in the round, Canizales turned the momentum of the fight decidedly in his favor, exploding with a pair of rights to DeJesus' head that sent him to the canvas just as the bell sounded.

DeJesus, 32, easily beat referee Blair Talmadge's (USA) count, but carried the aftereffects of the knockdown into the third. Sensing he had the fight under control, Canizales, 33, began to pick apart DeJesus, who spent most of the next three rounds leaning against the ropes absorbing blows.

When the bell rang to begin the seventh, DeJesus sat on his stool and refused to go on. Bruised around his eyes, DeJesus claimed afterward that he was blinded by a substance on Canizales' gloves. Greg Sirb, the executive director of the Pennsylvania State Athletic Commission, examined Canizales' gloves and found nothing wrong with them.

"I thought I fought the same as I did that last time," DeJesus maintained. "If you don't have your eyes, you can't do anything."

Eyes or no eyes, DeJesus might not have been able to catch the probable future Hall of Famer anyway. Canizales said he trained off-and-on for about two weeks for the first fight. This time, he prepared for two months.

"Good fighters bring out the best in me," Canizales said. "I think he quit because he couldn't touch me."

Canizales admitted after the fight the end is near. Win or lose, he was going to evaluate his situation after the DeJesus fight, and possibly end his illustrious career, which included a six-year title reign and 16 straight defenses as bantam champ, with a big finale in his hometown of Laredo.

"Orlando looked good, he showed he still has something left," ESPN2 boxing analyst Teddy Atlas said after the fight. "He's always conducted himself with class and consistency in the ring, and he's realistic about where his career is right now. Someone should give him a final title shot as a nice farewell. He deserves it."

Television: ESPN2

Promoter: Peltz Boxing Promotions

(6-4-99)

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May 1986: Marvelous Marvin Tames The Beast. Plus: Hearns-Shuler, Mike Tyson, Bramble-Crawley, Sandoval-Canizales, Marvin Johnson, McGuigan-Cabrera, Arguello-Costello, Weaver-Williams.

June 1986: Barry's Back In The USA: McGuigan Breathes A Breath Of Fresh Air into American Fight Scene. Plus: Bobby Czyz, Robbie Sims, Qawi-Holyfield preview, Berbick-Thomas, Bruno-Coetzee.

July 1986: Spinks-Holmes II: Who Really Won? Plus: Frank Bruno, Richie Sandoval, Kevin Watts, Tyson-Tillis, Boza-Edwards-Alli, Johnson-Burns.

Aug. 1986: Is Sugar Ray Still Sweet? Plus: Lloyd Honeyghan, Tyson-Green, Cooney-Gregg, Hall of Fame (Eder Jofre, Benny Lynch, Bud Taylor, Sam McVey, Nat Langham, John Chambers), Bernardo Pinango.

Sept. 1986: Gerry Cooney vs. Mike Tyson: Who Would Win? Plus: Cruz-McGuigan, Hearns-Medal, Tyson-Gross, Sims-Duran.

Dec. 1986: The Weekend That Shook The Boxing World. Rosario-Bramble & Honeyghan-Curry. Plus: Butch Lewis interview, Buster Drayton, Hector Camacho, Jake LaMotta.

April 1987: Hagler-Leonard Souvenir Issue. Plus: Czyz, Orlando Canizales, Mugabi-Thomas, Biggs-Snipes, Chavez-LaPorte, Bonecrusher-Witherspoon II, Haugen-Paul.

May 1987: Mike Tyson: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Year-end awards, *The Ring* annual ratings, Louie Espinoza, Herol Graham.

June 1987: Vinny Paz: Phenom Or Phony? Plus: Tyson-Bonecrusher, Mark Breland, Brian Mitchell, Holyfield, Czyz-Edwards, Olajide-Lee, Curry-Montgomery.

July 1987: Spinks-Cooney: The Fight That Refused To Die. Plus: The new *Ring* ratings, Terry Marsh, George Foreman's return, Khaosai Galaxy, Hearns-Andries, Whitaker-Mayweather.

Aug. 1987: Sugar Ray: Still In Style. Plus: Leonard-Hagler, all-time heavyweight ratings, Czyz-MacDonald, Camacho-Davis.

Sept. 1987: Michael Olajide: The Look Of The Future? Plus: Tyson-Thomas, Jeff Fenech, middleweight muddle, Tsuyoshi Hamada, Juan Roldan, Harold Knight.

Nov. 1987: Tyson Wins Heavyweight Triple Crown. Plus: McCallum-Curry, Carlos Monzon interview, triple champions, Orlin & Terry Norris, Ramirez-Alli, Fenech-Richardson, Matthew Hilton.

Dec. 1987: Spinks & Lewis: Boxing's Beastie Boys. Plus: Starling-Breland, Ramzi Hassan, Honeyghan-Hatcher, Holyfield-Ocasio.

Jan. 1988: Darrin Van Horn-Million Dollar Baby? Plus: Evander Holyfield, Hill-Stewart, Juan Coggi, great hookers, AIDS.

Feb. 1988: Gold Outshines Glitter: Tate Tops Olajide. Plus: Tyson-Biggs, Kalambay-Barkley, Hearns-Roldan, fights we'd like to see.

April 1988: Evander Holyfield: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Special year-end awards, Holyfield-Qawi II, Foreman-Sekorski, Hill-Angulo.

May 1988: George Foreman: "I Can Beat Tyson." Plus: Tyson-Holmes, Jesse Benavides, Showtime, no-knockout artists.

Aug. 1988: Julio Cesar Chavez: The Kid From Culiacan. Plus: Holyfield, bad decisions, Lockridge-Knight, Starling-Breland II, Brown-Trice, Haugen-Santana.

Sept. 1988: Sugar Ray: Here He Comes Again! Plus: Andries-Czyz, Kid Chocolate, Don Dunphy, Don Lalonde.

Oct. 1988: Mike Tyson: What Price Glory? Plus: Tyson-Spinks, Hearns-Barkley, Davey Moore.

Nov. 1988: Donny Lalonde: "Sugar Ray is Out Of His Mind!" Plus: Hall of Fame selections (Carlos Ortiz, Joe Brown, Billy Graham, Cus D'Amato, Jimmy Jacobs), Nunn-Tate, Molinares-Starling, Honeyghan-Chung, '88 Olympians.

Jan. 1989: Meldrick Taylor: Philly Phenom. Plus: Marvin Hagler, Alex Wallau, Taylor-McGirt, Olympic results.

Feb. 1989: Julio Cesar Chavez. Plus: Chavez-Ramirez, all-time lightweight ratings, Louie Espinoza, Simon Brown, Roger Mayweather.

March 1989: Hearns Next For Sugar Ray? Plus: Leonard-Lalonde, Prince Charles Williams, Hearns-Kinchen, Nunn-Roldan, Hines-Hilton.

May 1989: The Best Of '88. Plus: Year-end awards, Evander Holyfield, Pryor-Morales, Fenech-Navarro.

Jan. 1990: Boxing's Bible Reborn At Age 68. Plus: Carlos Monzon, Mike Tyson, Leonard-Duran, Daniel Zaragoza, Nunn-Barkley, Whitaker-Ramirez, George Foreman (color).

Feb. 1990: Mike Tyson: Riddick Bowe & Ray Mercer Take Aim. Plus: Bobby Czyz, Gerry Cooney, Chuck Wepner, Antonio Esparragoza, Roman-Laciar.

March 1990: The '80s—Great Fights, Great Fighters (color). Plus: Jeff Harding, Evander Holyfield, Pete Rademacher, Sharkey-McCoy.

April 1990: Pernell Whitaker: Fighter Of The Year (color). Plus: Tiger Flowers, Duran-Leonard, Chavez-Taylor preview, Jorge Paez, Ali-Cooper.

May 1990: Big George Talks Tough: "Tyson Won't Be That Difficult!" Plus: Ed Hopson, Russian fighters, grudge wars, Archie Moore, Kid Berg, Marcel Cerdan, Chavez-Cortes.

June 1990: Buster! How James Douglas Shocked The World. Plus: Michael Moorer, Camacho-Paez, Tommy Farr, Excuses, Dick Tiger, Ruben Olivares-Jeff Chandler.

July 1990: "I'm Hungrier Than Ever Before," By Evander Holyfield. Plus: James Toney, Buddy McGirt, Glenwood Brown, Aaron Davis, Michael Carbajal, Jorge Paez, Kid Gavilan, Mark Breland, Ali-Liston II (color).

Aug. 1990: Chavez: His Greatness Confirmed ... Is He The Best Mexican Fighter Ever? Plus: Matthew Saad Muhammad, John L. Sullivan & Mike Tyson, Michael Nunn, Mark Breland, Harold Johnson, Cus D'Amato, Louis-Godoy (color).

Sept. 1990: Marvin Hagler-Can He Resist The Irresistible Temptation? Plus: Thomas Hearns, Sanchez-Saddler, Paul Banke, puncher vs. chin, Beau Jack, Robinson-LaMotta (color).

Oct. 1990: Rocky Graziano—Thanks For The Memories. Plus: Aaron Pryor, Junior Jones, Mike Tyson, Chris Eubank, Wolgast-Nelson, Hall of Fame.

Nov. 1990: Tyson vs. Foreman. Can Iron Mike Stop The Blast From The Past? Plus: Bruce Seldon, best chins, Sullivan-Kilrain (co... Azumah Nelson, LaStarza.

Dec. 1990: Exclusive Annual Report: The B... Of The Game. Plus: Douglas-Holyfield pre... Julio Cesar Chavez, Joe Grim, Whitaker-Ma... Rosi-Van Horn, Benny Leonard, Douglas-T... (color).

Jan. 1991: Boxing's Baddest Bad Boy: ... Benn Plays By His Own Rules. Plus: Ro... Duran, Kid Akeem, Jose Napoles, J... Carruthers, LaMotta-Zale, Dempsey-Willard (c...

Feb. 1991: Boxing On TV—Now You'll ... Plus: Ismael Laguna, Tommy Morrison in Ro... Reggie Tuur, Chiquita Gonzalez, Harold B... Joe Louis.

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April 1991: Julio Cesar Chavez—Fighter O... Year. Plus: Tyson-Stewart, James Leija, W... Benitez, Pedro Decima, Moore-Bassey.

June 1991: Pain, Frustration, Confidence ... Hope: Meldrick Taylor's Life After Ch... Plus: Foreman-Holyfield preview, Norris-Lea... David Kamau, Freddie Steele, Bennie Bri... Leonard's career (color).

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Aug. 1991: Foreman Gives Holyfield A Fig... And The World A Thrill (color). Plus: Ma... weight, Harry Greb, Kevin Kelley, Louis-Du... Simon Brown-Blocker, Chavez-Duplessis, S... Ray Robinson.

Oct. 1991: A Hit Again-How Far Can Tha... Hearns Go? Plus: Battling Levinsky, Oba ... Dave McAuley, Muhammad Ali, Lou Am... Luther McCarty, ethnic matchups, computer ... heavy tournament, Cerdan-Hagler, Ro... Marciano (color).

Nov. 1991: Mike Tyson's Fight For Greatne... Will November 8 Be His Moment? Plus: Ed... Rosario, Jeff Fenech, overrated/underrat... Giardello-Graham, Lennox Lewis, Marcel Cer... Leonard-Hearns I, heavyweight compu... tournament, Ali portrait (color).

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Jan. 1992: Our Exclusive Annual Report: ... State Of The Game. Plus: Jerry Quarry, ... Cesar Chavez, Mysterious Billy Smith, ... Garnache, moving up in weight, Billy Co... Michael Spinks, Joe Louis (color).

May 1992: James Toney—Fighter Of The Ye... Plus: Myung Woo Yuh, Khaosai Galaxy, Ro... Graziano, Billy Soose, Roy Jones, James Wa... Duran-Chavez, Marvin Hagler (color).

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July 1992: Does Larry Holmes Deserve A T... Shot? Plus: Nelson-Fenech II, Tracy Patters... Kelley-Dorsey, fat fighters, Buchanan-Camac... Holmes-Ali (color).

Aug. 1992: Holyfield-Holmes Prefight. Holme... "I See Me Takin' Holyfield Outta There." Pl... Iran Barkley, Herbie Hide, George Foreman ... Cobb, Carnival of Champions, Harry Gre... Haugen-Mancini, Oscar De La Hoya, Ge... Tunney (color).

Sept. 1992: Chavez: Unbeaten At 80-0. ... What If He Had To Face These Guys? Pl... Bobby Czyz, Genaro Hernandez, Norris-Tay...

...mmy Gibbons, Sugar Ray Leonard's career, ...ar Ray Robinson (color).

...1992: **The Supreme Dream: The Heavyweight Hopes Of The Heavyweight Hopefuls.** ...Kevin Kelley, All-Time Top 10: South Africa, ...rick Taylor, Sharmba Mitchell, Bob Foster, ...ire, Max Baer (color).

...1992: **Is Riddick Bowe The Next Heavyweight Champion?** Plus: Morrison-Hipp, ...ales-Chandler, Chavez-Camacho preview, ...alia Best of Nation, Tyson speaks from ...m, Corbett-Sullivan (color), Tracy Patterson, ...Barrett, Knockout Brown.

...1993: **America's Tribute To The Brown ...mber: Joe Louis.** Plus: Virgil Hill, Junior Jones, ...yer Mayweather, Chicago boxing, Orlando ...uela, Jose Napoles (color).

...1993: **From Question Man To Answer ...: Riddick Bowe Leaves No Doubts.** Plus: ...nox Lewis, Lopez-Gamache, Frank Bruno, ...ny Kansas, Frank Fletcher, Crisanto Espana, ...e-Lewis (color).

...1993: **Riddick Bowe: Fighter Of The Year.** ...Grand Slam" fight card, Toney-Barkley preview, ...ms East, Joe Louis-John Henry Lewis, All-Time ...10 Argentina, Fighters of the Year (color).

...1993: **Oscar De La Hoya's Sprint To The ...p: Is He Good Enough *Now*?** Plus: Carbajal-...ndez preview, Lennox Lewis, THE RING Poll, ...die Pendleton.

...1993: **A Ring Exclusive: Julio Cesar ...vez Speaks Out.** Plus: Bobby Czyz, 10 ...test punchers, Rafael Ruelas, Carmen Basilio, ...ning of the Fifth Street Gym, Sugar Ray ...nard (color).

...1993: **Tommy Morrison: Good Enough To ...t Big George, But Will He Win The ...eyweight Title?** Plus: Riddick Bowe, Mike ...rino, Billy Conn-Joe Louis, All-Time Top 10: ...erto Rico, Charles Murray.

...1994: **Michael Carbajal: Fighter Of The Year.** ...Brown-Norris, Kevin Kelley, Ceferino Garcia, ...scar De La Hoya, Tunney Hunsaker, Spinks-Foster.

...1994 **(92-Page Special) Division-By-Division: The Greatest Fighters Of All-Time.** ...Virgil Hill & Orlando Canizales, Kostya Tszyu, ...mes Toney, What If ... Dempsey vs. Wills.

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...1994: **Rating The Champs: Whitaker & ...ney Lead The Field ... But Roy Jones Is ...Getting Fast.** Plus: Oscar De La Hoya, Meldrick ...ylor, Rafael Ruelas, Curtis Cokes.

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...1994: **Fighting-Mad! James Toney Just ...Wants To Beat People Up.** Plus: Duran & ...Robinson, Don King, Mike McCallum, Injuries (part ...) Tom Molineaux.

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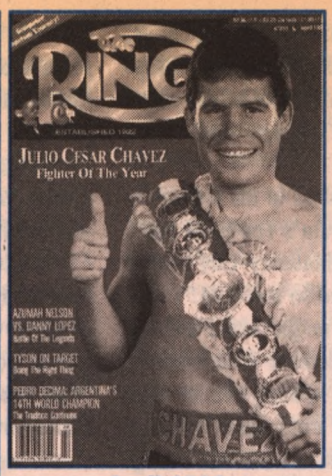

April 1991

Ruelas brothers, Quincy Taylor, "Unfinished Business," Dave Maier, All-Time Top 10: Canada.

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Dec. 1995: McNeeley Goes Too Soon—Mike Tyson: The Beast Is Yet To Come. Plus: Tommy Morrison, Naseem Hamed, Chiquita Gonzalez, Gaspar Ortega, best chins.

Winter 1995 (92-Page Special): Buster Mathis Jr.: "Mike Tyson, You Got A Fight Comin' On." Plus: Holyfield-Bowe III preview, Wayne McCullough, Jesse James Hughes, Norris-Vaden preview, *The Ring* Insiders' Poll, What If ... Moore-Ayala Jr.

Feb. 1996: Bowe's The Man (For Now), But Is He Man Enough For Tyson? Also: Lennox Lewis, Hamed-Barrera, Paul Banke, Vince Phillips, boxing on Madison Ave., What If ... Leonard-Pryor.

April 1996: Oscar De La Hoya—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Mike Tyson, Gabe Ruelas, 1995 in review, All-Time Top 10: Africa.

May 1996: Exclusive Annual Report: The State Of The Game. Plus: Frankie Randall, Tim Witherspoon, Roy Jones, Bernard Hopkins.

June 1996 (92-Page Special): The Top 50 Fighters Of The Last 50 Years. Plus: Barrera-McKinney, Oscar De La Hoya, internet, Decade To Remember (1940s): Jimmy Bivins.

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Aug. 1996: A Closer Look At Tyson. Where He's At ... And Where He's Going. Plus: Joe Frazier, Roberto Duran, Buster Douglas, Arturo Gatti, women's boxing.

Sept. 1996: Lennox Lewis: Tough Enough For Tyson? Plus: Lewis-Mercer, Olympic team, Pernell Whitaker, Mark Johnson, Rocky, Scrapiron Johnson, heavyweight hopefuls.

Nov. 1996: Pole-Axed! Low Blows, Sinking Bowe, Ugly Show. Plus: Bowe-Golota I, Blinky Palermo, exciting fighters, Winky Wright, Joe Brown.

Dec. 1996: Our Spin On Roy Jones. Plus: heavyweight division, Olympic recap, Luis Rodriguez, Puerto Rican fighters, Danny Hodge, Saad Muhammad.

Jan. 1997: Riddick Bowe's Promise. "This Time I'm Whipping Golota's Ass!" Plus: David Reid, Whitaker-Rivera II, meaningless records, Dick Tiger, Jess Willard.

March 1997 (92-Page Special): Mike Tyson. Can He Reclaim His Greatness? Plus: 10 greatest controversies, Teddy Atlas & Michael Moorer, Kostya Tszyu, George Chuvalo.

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June 1997 (Special Collector's issue): Holyfield-Tyson II: What It Means For Now ... And Forever. Plus: Holyfield-Tyson fight poster, Naseem Hamed, computer unification, Sayers-Heenan, state of the game.

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Holiday 1997: Roy Jones: When He's Motivated, He's Unstoppable—Got That, Evander? Plus: Julio Cesar Green, Sugar Shane Mosley, boxers' day jobs, Tyson's mentor, Kid Lavigne.

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Feb. 1998: Welter-Skelter! The Hottest Division In Boxing. Plus: Lewis-Golota, Olympic update, Art Shires, boxing I.Q.

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Nov. 1998: Oscar De La Hoya vs. The All-Time Greats. Plus: David Reid, Fernando Vargas, Cory Spinks, LeRoy Neiman, Don King, Hall of Fame.

Dec. 1998: Can Tyson Muscle His Way Back To The Top? 25 Insiders Have Their Say. Plus: Oscar De La Hoya, Teofilo Stevenson, Team Freedom, Tapia-Romero II preview, Roy Jones.

Holiday 1998 (92-Page Special): A War Worthy Of An Encore: Why Gatti & Robinson Have To Do It Again! Plus: Kostya Tszyu, Israel Cardona, Mills Lane, 50 greatest heavyweights.

Jan. 1999: Sugar Shane Mosley: The Sweet Tradition Continues. Plus: Evander Holyfield, Julio Cesar Chavez, Erik Morales, Ray "Windmill" White.

Feb. 1999: 1999! It's Gonna Be A Great Year For Boxing. Plus: Mike Tyson, Foreman-Holmes, David Reid, Eric Morel, Richie Mitchell, quitters.

March 1999: De La Hoya vs. Quartey: Does Bazooka Have The Weapons To Shoot Down Oscar? Plus: Sugar Shane Mosley, Lopez-Alvarez II, Roy Jones, Coley Wallace.

April 1999 (92-Page Special): Fighter Of The Year: Floyd Mayweather Jr.: 'He's So Good, It's Scary!" Plus: Fernando Vargas, James Page, Luisito Espinosa, Robinson-Gatti II, Archie Moore, Carlos Oritz, 1998 diary.

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Floyd Mayweather

(Continued from page 21)

you saw a crowd appreciate that kind of showboating? Exactly.

One of Juuko's tactics was to throw just a little low. Referee Mitch Halpern warned him about it several times, but it's tough to correct a fighter who is just slightly dirty all night. The challenger kept trying to lure the champion into an all-out trade, but Mayweather wasn't having any of it, and Juuko lacked the quickness to impose his will against Mayweather's effortless footwork.

Mayweather buckled Juuko's knees in the sixth, but didn't follow up. In the next round, a determined Juuko landed a good right of his own, but when he threw a combination, Mayweather fooled him by standing his ground for a while and tagging Juuko with a better flurry.

In the eighth round, Juuko actually found himself inside, but he quickly learned that Mayweather's reflexes remained superior close in. The champion got the best of it. Finally, in the ninth round, Mayweather stunned Juuko with a two-punch combination—two hard, overhand rights that set him up like a bowling pin. Mayweather followed with a straight right, and Juuko slid to the canvas.

Juuko arguably made it up a moment before the count of 10, but Halpern, looking into his eyes, just kept counting, and Juuko's corner didn't argue. Their fighter had done all he could. Juuko's trainer, Freddie Roach, was in Mexico training Johnny Tapia for a WBA bantamweight title defense against Paulie Ayala, and he missed his flight to Las Vegas. Cutman Ruben Gomez ran the Juuko corner.

Second only to the drama of the kayo was the drama of Mayweather's grandmother, Bernice, who climbed between the ropes after the fight and promptly fainted. Ring physician Flip Homansky administered oxygen, and she was helped out of the ring.

Juuko, a Ugandan who fights out of Las Vegas, accepted the fight on two days notice after Goyo Vargas suddenly dropped out. Vargas' promoter, America Presents, said he had medical problems, but HBO's Lou DiBella said Vargas disappeared from camp two weeks earlier to get married and that his trainers didn't even know where he was.

Juuko was not ranked in the top 10 by the WBC, but Bob Arum's Top Rank had a contract to supply Mandalay Bay with a world title contest, and so the WBC's Jose Sulaiman waved his magic wand and the fight became a title defense scheduled for 12 rounds. In boxing, nothing cuts through red tape faster than cold cash. And by making up the rules as he went along, Sulaiman still got his title sanctioning fee for the WBC.

To most fighters, a title shot on HBO would be the pot of gold at the end of a long, hard rainbow, and it was difficult to understand how any fighter who could both breathe and talk wouldn't go for it. But sometimes people do things for which there are no reasonable explanations—especially in boxing.

Jerry Bilderrain, a matchmaker for California clubfights, noted that when a fighter jumps off a big card, he is not likely to inspire confidence in other promoters down the line.

It's debatable whether Vargas would have given the champion more trouble than Juuko. The stand-in was probably more difficult and determined. Add the fact that Mayweather had been preparing for someone else, and Juuko, who had much to gain and little to lose, was in fine position. The pressure was on Pretty Boy to win impressively and stay on his roll.

After the fight, the champion said he was pleased with his performance, adding that Juuko "was a little stronger than I expected."

Before he took out Hernandez and Manfredy back to back, the cocky Mayweather had a reputation among some ringsiders that was similar to Michael Nunn's in his middleweight days—skilled but unwatchable. There were few naysayers after the Hernandez and Manfredy performances, however. Perhaps Mayweather requires the role of upstart to do his best.

It wasn't that long ago that the 130-pound division was one of the better weight classes around. But now Gabe Ruelas and Azumah Nelson are gone from the scene. Jorge Paez is still competing, but no longer taken seriously. And it's unlikely Arturo Gatti will ever see 13[5] pounds again. Then, of course, there [is] Shane Mosley, who looks unbeatable—[a] perfect match for Mayweather. Bu[t] Mosley, who, like Mayweather, enjoy[s] testing himself against the best, is on [his] way north from 135 pounds to 140.

At 126 pounds, money magnet Prince Naseem Hamed is only four pounds away, and Mayweather has already declared he would go to England to fight him. Bu[t] "The Prince," now his own promoter and manager, has lately been picking and choosing opponents as carefully as Butterbean. A fighter reluctant to take on talented people his own size is not likely to take on the talented Mayweather, who is bigger.

It's possible Mayweather could lure the IBF's Roberto Garcia or the WBA's Takanori Hatakeyama into unification bouts, but such arrangements tend to get made only when there is plenty of cash in it for everyone. Right now, not one of the three champions is well-known enough to draw a large gate. Before the Juuko fight, Mayweather, clearly unenthusiastic about mere six-figure purses, said he might want to take a year or two off after disposing of this challenger. But that's not likely to happen.

All over the world fighters are working out every day, looking for championships. At least some of them ought to be suitable opponents for Mayweather, who, now all of 22 years old, must find new worlds to conquer.

Ivan Goldman is THE RING's West Coast correspondent.

De La Hoya vs. Trinidad

(Continued from page 26)

at De La Hoya's expressed desire to return to a more aggressive style against Trinidad. It makes his chin more vulnerable, but it also makes him more likely to explode the kind of shot he landed on Carr's face, a hook that knocked him flat.

"When you get hit with a shot like that, your head can't do nothing but be a little shaky," Carr admitted after De La Hoya knocked him out 55 seconds into the 11th round.

Carr spun half around as he rocked backward, collapsing on his face before De La Hoya could get close enough to land another blow. As it turned out, no more were necessary. Although Carr got up at the count of five, he was a man adrift, staggering sideways and then backward, as Steele closely watched him. De La Hoya charged forward, but Steele pushed him back to the neutral corner, and again turned to glance at Carr. What Steele saw on his face was the expression of a game man saying "Enough" without moving his lips.

"For some reason, I got tired at the end," said Carr, 48-3-1 (28). "I really should have been quicker. Oscar was very fast."

A week later, Trinidad was fast doing everything except signing the contract to fight De La Hoya. While his father and trainer, Felix Sr., argued with King over that last $500,000, the son continued to prepare for Pineda, thinking only of De La Hoya.

"I think they are afraid to fight me because they know what will happen," Trinidad said bluntly. "They know Oscar will visit the canvas."

That is a threat to be answered later, but certainly Pineda hit the canvas. With a dull thud.

"He hit me to the body so hard and so much, it knocked the air out of me," said Pineda, 36-2-1 (27). "I was in good condition, and that let me go an extra round. But he punches very hard."

It was evident almost immediately that Trinidad's hand speed was vastly superior to Pineda's, and that the challenger realized it as well. Pineda threw few punches in the first two rounds, and when he finally unloaded, he failed to deliver. Long before his punches had time to land, Trinidad either eluded them or countered with a quicker return that scored, which is why the challenger finished the night having connected on only nine percent of his punches (23 of 245). That lack of offense allowed Trinidad to do what Clancy says De La Hoya must prevent. Trinidad continuously moved forward, throwing punches and stalking a man unable to fire back enough to force him to retreat.

By the third round, the champion had turned into a stalker, walking ever closer to Pineda in search of the opening he knew he would find. He rocked Pineda in round three, and the partisan crowd of 8,156 bellowed Trinidad's name. But Pineda stayed composed, and no further damage was inflicted, thanks in part to his growing reluctance to move his fists too far away from his own ears. This obviously complicated Pineda's offensive efforts, but the fight was not going to last much longer anyway, because the very next round Trinidad closed the distance and the show with two short right hands to the head and a crushing left hook to the belly. Trinidad was so dominant, he not only landed 50 percent of his 151 punches, but in the final round connected on 32 of the final 52 he threw. Overwhelmed, Pineda could do little but implode, and was counted out at 2:53 of the fourth round by referee Roberto Ramirez after fielding the final hook to the stomach.

That Trinidad, 35-0 (30), can fight was obvious long before the Pineda bout, but there remains scant evidence yet that he can sell, which is what the fight game at his level is all about. Although his performance against Pineda elevated him further in the eyes of boxing purists, the IBF champion did nothing to help his argument for a higher purse than the $8-million guarantee he had originally been offered by King. Several thousand seats remained empty at Clemente Coliseum as Trinidad successfully defended the IBF welterweight title for the 14th time since winning it six years ago.

So after his battle with Pineda, Trinidad's real war began. The one between his promoter and his father. The war between his best interests and his financial interests. The war to make him a star. Trinidad may be the best welterweight in the world, but he is not paid like it, nor does he draw fans like it. Not even in Puerto Rico could the native son sell out an arena the way his American rival can. Therefore, he is not paid like De La Hoya, regardless of what he believes he will do to him when they meet. King, who has promoted Trinidad throughout his career, understood this. Trinidad's father did not appear to, and so the two fought for nearly three weeks over how much Trinidad would be paid for a unification fight that could make him one of the sport's biggest names if he can win in spectacular fashion.

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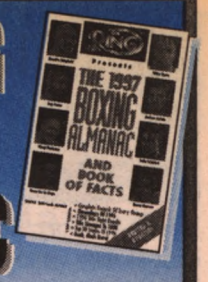
THE RING BOXING ALMANAC



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De La Hoya vs. Trinidad

(Continued from page 75)

It is an old story, but King put a new twist on it as they sat together inside the ring an hour after Pineda had fallen not 10 feet from where their chairs rested. With a heavy contingent of Puerto Rican press in front of him, King went to work building a box for his boxer, a box from which he could not easily extricate himself without agreeing to meet his greatest challenge at a price King could live with.

"Tonight you saw the march to destiny," King began. "Felix 'Tito' Trinidad showed the world how great he is. Now the march toward Oscar has begun. There is no way we will stand in the way of destiny. We are family. We may fight inside the house, but when we come out to the street we are unity. Every head must bow. Every knee must bend. Every tongue must confess that Tito Trinidad is the best welterweight in the world!"

At that, even members of the local press cheered, but over in the corner Don Felix, the father, glowered and said nothing. His son beamed, promising to destroy De La Hoya as he had Pineda, saying he would begin training in two days for the fight. King smiled too, but it was the malevolent grin of a master manipulator who knew a meeting was coming in a few hours, a loud meeting without the son or the press present. It would be a meeting between Don King and Don Felix in which all that would matter would be money.

"A family dispute is not the message Tito wants to send to our people," King said, suddenly becoming Puerto Rican for a night. "It is not a message he wants to send to the world. Seizing the time must be understood. This is Tito Time. It's not about money. Certainly there's no more slavery. A man must get paid for his labors. But this fight is about destiny. It's about timing. We must all agree that Tito must fight Oscar. The message has been sent. Tito is one of the greatest fighters in the world, but the world will not recognize that until they fight.

"We are trying to lift Puerto Rico to towering heights. If we concentrate on greed, we cannot do that. It's time to contribute something back to our community. This is an opportunity for Tito to say, 'Yes, we can!' when the world says, 'No you can't!' Tito is that symbol! His family will find a way, or make way, to fight Oscar De La Hoya!"

Now the crowd was roaring. This was not a press conference any more. It was an evangelical experience, with King transforming Trinidad from a fighter wanting to get paid into an instrument of hope for his people. Soon even the fighter was into it, standing up and pounding his right fist to his chest and saying, "I'm not worried about the fight. I'm a fighting rooster. I fight whoever I have to. My people want this fight, along with my mother, my sisters, my brothers, my family. I'm telling you Oscar. I'm ready for you!"

As Trinidad thundered his willingness to fight, King sat smiling at his side. The representative of the people of Puerto Rico had spoken. A day later, King gave up the last $500,000 in exchange for a more beneficial upside, and the deal was done.

So now, at last, we come to the welterweight fight the boxing world has wanted to see for the last two years. Finally, with their fists, De La Hoya and Trinidad will settle who is the champion and who is something less. As that day approaches, De La Hoya continues to promise new aggressiveness, and Trinidad continues to say he knows nothing else. And so they are on a collision course, and when there is a collision somebody usually gets hurt. Both fighters believe they know who that will be—the other guy.

"If you told me the father of Oscar De La Hoya doesn't want him to fight me, I would believe you," Trinidad said. "I know I am the best welterweight in the world. I am the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world. I already know this, but the fight with De La Hoya is a fight the world wants, so I am ready to do it. He knows what will come."

Trinidad speaks these words with the supreme confidence of a man who has known nothing but domination all his life. He sounds the way people who have grown up with money all their lives sound when they talk about paying the bills. It is not a problem for them. That is how Trinidad feels about his opponents, even De La Hoya.

In his own way, De La Hoya shares the same opinion of Trinidad. There is respect there, but respect is not fear, which is why both finally agreed to settle their differences and fulfill their dreams in the way fighters do.

"You guys are going to be the first to witness the old, but also the new Oscar," De La Hoya assured the world. "I have returned to my old style. Enough with all the boxing stuff. Let's just take care of the job and fight. Let our fists do the talking."

Soon they will and, as Gil Clancy says, may the best chin win.

Ron Borges covers boxing for the Boston Globe and is a regular contributor to this magazine.

Omar Sheika

(Continued from page 53)

to understand something about Omar: He's stubborn. Before the Booth fight, Omar felt he could win a world championship and be successful on talent alone. I always tell him, God gave you the talent, but you have to water it to cultivate it. He's expanded his thinking after Booth, and he understands that we all want the best for him.

"I think he was just having trouble putting everything into perspective. Omar doesn't believe in losing. The loss is still with him. I try not to mention that loss to him anymore, but sometimes a loss makes you better. I think that fight helped him learn a lot about himself, that life does go on. I think the most important thing he learned was that things don't always go your way and you have to be ready to make an adjustment no matter what happens. I've seen a difference in the kid. I watched him grow up and go on. He pays more attention, he's more focused."

And he's in one of the most enviable positions in boxing. The super middleweight class is littered with mediocrity, and may be the weakest division in the sport. The 168-pound class is a jumbled mess with little or no prime-time appeal. Welshman Joe Calzaghe, a virtual unknown in America, is the closest thing the division has to a potential star. The weight class suffers from such a dearth of talent, it has to depend on aging veteran Vinny Pazienza as the biggest drawing attraction.

"I think Sheika's a good prospect and a

good puncher," said J Russell Peltz, who has promoted several of Sheika's fights. "He just has to learn to move his head a little bit. I think all the champions are beatable, but I personally feel [IBF champion Sven] Ottke is the most difficult to beat of the champions in that division. I think Richie Woodhall is mediocre, and I give Sheika a good shot against Richie Woodhall."

Though Peltz promoted perhaps Sheika's worst performance, when he received an eight-round gift decision over Demetrius Davis in Philadelphia in December '97, Peltz acknowledged that Sheika is certainly exciting and popular with fans. According to Peltz, he has everything he needs to be a star: He's in a division that does not have a dominating champion, and no one sells tickets like a puncher.

What Sheika is, according to Velazquez, is a great finisher—he challenges anyone to name a better finisher in boxing today. Sheika has a throwback appeal that draws fans. When Sheika fights, you get the sense that you just walked through a time portal and came out in the 1950s. Perhaps the only thing missing about Sheika's straight-forward, power-punching approach are black hightops and a crew cut. Max Kellerman, studio analyst for ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*, agrees with Peltz and Velazquez about Sheika's appeal.

"I think at 168, you're talking about a guy that even if he doesn't win the title, I'd like to see him fight," Kellerman said. "He's very exciting, and he has a very big right hand. He has looked better recently than he had earlier in his career. Sheika is the only guy at super middleweight that I would pay to see. Seeing him fight in your town is money well spent. I heard the Booth fight was tight, but a lot of people said Sheika deserved to win. Sheika forced the whole fight, and Booth won by one point in his hometown, so figure it out."

Sheika felt he responded to what was wrong in the Booth fight by making an interesting change in his corner. Sheika elevated Velazquez to head trainer, replacing Kevin Rooney, the one-time trainer of Mike Tyson and trainer of choice for many of manager Bill Cayton's fighters.

"Rooney and I had different ways of doing things," Sheika said. "Al has been with me since I first started boxing back in my amateur days. I felt more comfortable with Al than anyone else. If Al was training me, I think I would have beaten Booth. Rooney wanted me to slug a lot and not have a game plan or move around. He made me feel like I was desperate, like I had to get in there and I couldn't do anything else but slug."

Against Jenkins, Sheika showed another dimension. He fought smart. Using angles, Sheika timed his right hand perfectly over his oppponent's right jab. He floored Jenkins with a roundhouse right in the third. Sensing Jenkins was in trouble, Sheika closed in for the finish, swarming his wobbly opponent until referee Bill Holmes called a halt to the bout at 2:15 of the round. It was only the second time Jenkins, 13-4 (11), had been stopped.

Cayton, for one, realizes the talent he has in Sheika. He has gotten him considerable TV exposure; Sheika fought on television 11 times in '97, more than any other fighter in the world, according to Cayton.

"Omar, in my judgment, might be the best super middleweight in the world right now," Cayton said, who alleged that Paschal and Steve Collins and Robin Reid all turned down fights with Shieka. "He's just a very good fighter. We're looking for a title fight, and were hoping to fight Joe Calzaghe, but Omar will have a title fight shortly, possibly against Richie Woodhall. What Omar is is authentically tough. No one can beat him; you'd have to kill him to beat him."

The funny thing about Sheika, Cayton noted, is that he used to feel he didn't have to do anything to improve. He wanted Cayton to give him tough fights from the very beginning. Velazquez breaks into a laugh when he recalls Sheika's first pro fight against Billy James in Detroit. Sheika tore apart James, scoring a third-round knockout. Afterward, Sheika approached Velazquez about getting a title fight—right after his pro debut.

That moment will arrive soon for Sheika. He can eat now, his storage of confidence has been restocked, and he's ready to take over the super middleweight landscape.

"This is a division where no one knows the champions, and I want to make people realize the talent of this division," Sheika said. "Next time, I'll knock out the guy in the front me. I learned that's the only way you win." ■

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Al Andrews

(Continued from page 57)

been around until the final bell. Yet the man "whose lack of hitting power rendered him completely harmless," according to Joseph Nichols of the *New York Times*, flattened Turner so totally in the third round that the Philadelphia fighter was out cold for 12 minutes.

The only mistake Andrews made that night was celebrating the biggest win of his career by falling off the wagon.

"I grabbed one cigarette, and was hooked right back again," said Andrews. "That's how bad cigarettes are."

On account of his nicotine addiction, Andrews said, "I'd just run out of gas in the seventh or eighth round. And you don't run out of gas and expect to win."

The next year, 1955, Andrews managed only five wins in 11 bouts, dropping decisions to, among others, Joey Giardello, Willie Pastrano, and Gene Fullmer.

"Giardello was another bad decision," said Andrews. "The whole crowd thought I beat him. For Pastrano, I blew myself up to 163. Willie weighed 167, and was just too big for me. On top of that, he was a helluva good boxer. He could move like a featherweight, with the prettiest left jab I ever saw. Fullmer was a good fighter, but I might as well have stayed home. The fight was in Utah, where he was from, and I thought I won."

A lot of the decisions against him had more to do with geography than boxing, and Andrews said that "When you fight in somebody's backyard, you dance to the hometown band." The important thing was that he made a decent living for his wife and daughter, and could even afford to have plumbing installed in his parents' house.

"I didn't count losses," said Andrews, who ended up 45-36-2 (5), not including any unrecorded bouts he may have had. "I didn't even count wins. It was my living."

It was late in his career, against Joe Schmolze, when "something went haywire upstairs," Andrews said. After the October '58 bout, which he lost via 10-round decision, Andrews felt numb on his right side, from below his ear to around his waist. There were no CATscans or MRIs then, and the doctors took a while to arrive at a diagnosis. In the meantime, the numbness notwithstanding, Andrews kept working. Within a month of the Schmolze bout, he lost 10-rounders to Lou Bailey and Del Flanagan. Then he fought four more times is '59, including bouts against top middleweight contenders Joe DeNucci and Joey Giambra and future light heavyweight champion Jose Torres, before finally hanging up his gloves.

A natural 154-pounder, Andrews often gave away too much weight. But that was nothing like the size disadvantage he faced at four o'clock one morning in 1969, when he was driving to Wisconsin from a job in Illinois. His car was a Volkswagen, and the one that struck it head-on, going almost 100 miles-per-hour around a bend in the highway, wasn't.

"They got me out with a blow torch," said Andrews. His legs were broken in 13 different places, and a knee was shattered. He was in the hospital for more than four months, and could only hobble around until recently, when an operation in which coral was implanted in his legs enabled him to get around pretty well again.

But Andrews is still "half crippled" on his right side, and there's that other thing that's been an albatross even longer than what happened in the Schmolze fight.

"I'm smoking yet," said Andrews. "I keep talking about quitting, but I can't." ■

Pete Ehrmann is a freelance writer based in West Allis, Wisconsin, and a regular contributor to this magazine.

New Face

(Continued from page 58)

on May 7 in Las Vegas placed Jantuah on the world scene and should bolster his WBC ranking, which was only 22nd prior to the victory.

"Since I was 10 years old, I used to get challenged regularly," recalled the 5'11", 24-year-old Jantuah in a thick Ghanaian accent. "My father taught me how to fight, and he would tell me I had to be strong, I had to be a man. I should never let a guy my size [beat] me. I would get beat up on the street and come home and get beat up again by my father. He told me he never wanted to see me get beat up again."

It reached a point that Jantuah frequently went looking for revenge, and usually got it. As a nine-year-old playing soccer, Jantuah was confronted by a bigger, older kid of around 15. The older kid beat him up during the soccer match, but little did he suspect that Jantuah would remember. Some time later, Jantuah ran into that same person and reminded him of his transgression.

"I reminded him of who I was, and he said, 'So,'" Jantuah recalled. "I waited for him and I beat him up seriously."

Jantuah still fights with a sense of urgency. Against Santos-Pena, he quickly asserted his straight-forward, pressing style. From the opening bell, Santos-Pena had trouble coping with Jantuah's powerful right hand. As the fight progressed, Jantuah forced the more experienced Santos-Pena, 22-1-1 (15), to hold on in desperation. By the third round, Santos-Pena's nose was bleeding.

Santos-Pena, in trouble and getting desperate, finally nailed Jantuah with a good left to open the fifth round, but the welterweight from Ghana just kept coming. When Santos-Pena tried backing him into the ropes, Jantuah blasted him with a right uppercut, a left hand, and a right hook that sent Santos-Pena crashing to the canvas. As Santos-Pena rose on unsteady legs, referee Jay Nady waved the fight off at the 2:53 mark.

After such an impressive showing, it's hard to believe that Jantuah had some doubts about getting into the ring with Santos-Pena, simply because he had never sparred with nor fought a southpaw before. Jantuah hesitated about coming to the United States, too. Steve Kermah, his manager, found him through Azumah Nelson, the two-division former champion and Ghana's greatest fistic export to date. Nelson first saw Jantuah in his pro debut, and after the fight, approached the young novice and told him he was strong and that he just had to learn to use his strength in the ring. He also invited Jantuah to work out with him and Ike Quartey.

Boxers' purses are paltry in Africa, which is the reason why the continent's best fighters are forced to come to America to further their careers. Kermah and Nelson both felt it would be in Jantuah's best interest to follow suit. According to Elan Haim, who trains Jantuah with Joe Goossen, it was Nelson who finally persuaded Jantuah to leave Ghana.

Since he has been in the United States, the fighter's focus has been solely on boxing.

He comes to Goossen's gym at 10 a.m. and leaves at around 1 p.m.

"Kofi's certainly picked up fast on America and American style, and he finally capped it off with a fight against Santos-Pena that made a huge statement," Goossen said. "When I saw Kofi, I saw something in his sparring that impressed me, and that he had a vicious punch from the beginning. I also saw the desire to win. Kofi didn't get discouraged even though other guys were more technically sound than him. He didn't soak up big punches against guys who were better than him. Plus, he has an ability to not get tired and seems to get stronger when the other guys are getting weak."

Jantuah ended up in the gym at 17 because he was getting into so many street-fights. That's where his pressing style began. Now, according to Goossen, he has opponents so unhinged by his aggression, they start fighting as if their lives are at stake and make foolish mistakes.

"I think Jantuah is an excellent fighter," said Max Kellerman, a studio analyst for ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*. "He's exciting, and I think he's a legit prospect. He's strong, but at this point in his career, he's a little one-dimensional. I think his offense is a little predictable, but that will change in time. He certainly has world-class potential."

Jantuah's goal is to fight WBA welterweight champion James Page sometime early next year, then, like every welter on the planet, take on Oscar De La Hoya. Goossen likes Jantuah's style so much, he hasn't tinkered with it. But he would like to see him show a little more defense, as well as go to the body more and fire a consistent jab.

"Goossen has so much confidence in this kid's ability and power, Joe feels he can go into the ring with anyone," Haim said. "Kofi knows he's a bad-ass once he gets into that ring. As Joe would say, 'He's in your face.' He just keeps coming forward."

Now that he's been here for a while, Jantuah likes it in the U.S. He likes the option of take-out food and the ability to live in better conditions than he did in Ghana, and he wants to stay. But he also feels some pressure. If he loses, he thinks he will be shipped right back to Ghana, with everything he worked so hard to achieve disappearing along with his unbeaten record. When you're from a poverty-stricken area like Kumasi, something like that will make you fight even harder than a rock to the back of the head. ■

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WORLDWIDE RATINGS

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The ratings of the three major governing bodies recognized by The Ring are supplied by the organizations themselves. They are updated on these pages as soon as they are made available to us. In this issue, the WBA ratings were compiled as of February 1999, the WBC as of May 1999, and the IBF as of May 1999.

HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Lennox Lewis (GB)	C	–	–
Evander Holyfield (USA)	–	C	C
John Ruiz (USA)	1	2	3
Zeljko Mavrovic (CROA)	2	10	–
David Tua (NZ)	3	–	1
Michael Grant (USA)	4	6	–
Larry Donald (USA)	5	3	4
Andrew Golota (POL)	6	12	11
Shannon Briggs (USA)	7	–	–
Axel Schulz (GER)	8	–	–
Hasim Rahman (USA)	9	–	5
Lou Savarese (USA)	10	–	–
Henry Akinwande (GB)	14	1	6
Kirk Johnson (CAN)	–	4	8
Oleg Maskaev (UKR)	28	5	–
Jade Scott (USA)	13	7	–
Vitali Klitchko (UKR)	–	8	–
Brian Nielsen (DEN)	21	9	–
Ike Ibeabuchi (NIG)	15	–	2
Chris Byrd (USA)	23	–	7
Danell Nicholson (USA)	–	–	9
Monte Barrett (USA)	20	–	10

CRUISERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Juan Carlos Gomez (CUBA)	C	–	–
Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)	–	C	–
Arthur Williams (USA)	–	–	C
Dale Brown (CAN)	1	10	–
Ramon Garbey (CUB)	2	–	5
Bruce Scott (GB)	3	–	–
Marcelo Dominguez (ARG)	4	–	–
Saul Montana (MEX)	5	1	1
Stefan Anghern (SWI)	6	–	–
Terry Dunstan (GB)	7	–	9
Alexei Ilin (RUS)	8	–	–
Andre Purlette (GUY)	9	–	–
Torsten May (GER)	10	–	12
Robert Daniels (USA)	–	2	–
Nate Miller (USA)	–	3	–
Virgil Hill (USA)	11	4	–
Stefan Anghern (SWI)	–	5	–
Valery Vikhor (LAT)	–	6	–
Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)	–	7	4
Ezequiel Paixao (BRA)	–	8	–
Bruce Scott (GB)	–	9	11
Alex Gonzales (USA)	–	12	2
Stefan Anghern (SWI)	–	–	3

Imamu Mayfield (USA)	15	11	6
Gary Wilcox (USA)	–	–	7
Ken Murphy (USA)	18	–	8
Adolpho Washington (USA)	–	–	10

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Roy Jones (USA)	C	C	–
Reggie Johnson (USA)	–	–	C
Michael Nunn (USA)	1	–	–
Montell Griffin (USA)	2	–	–
David Telesco (USA)	3	4	4
Hisashi Teraji (JAP)	4	–	–
Lou Del Valle (USA)	5	3	3
Muhammad Siluvangi (ZAI)	6	12	5
Clinton Woods (GB)	7	–	–
Eric Harding (USA)	8	5	10
Yawe Davis (ITA)	9	–	–
Eddy Smulders (HOL)	10	–	–
Vacant	–	1	2
Dario Matteoni (ARG)	–	2	–
Crawford Ashley (GB)	13	6	–
Derrick Harmon (USA)	12	7	6
Lincoln Carter (USA)	–	8	11
Glenn Kelly (AUSTRL)	15	9	8
Anthony Bigeni (AUS)	–	10	–
Antonio Tarver (USA)	11	–	1
Will Taylor (USA)	–	–	7
Ray Berry (USA)	18	–	9

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Richie Woodhall (GB)	C	–	–
Frank Liles (USA)	–	C	–
Sven Ottke (GER)	–	–	C
Glenn Catley (GB)	1	–	–
Eric Lucas (CAN)	2	4	–
Thomas Tate (USA)	3	3	1
Bruno Girard (FRA)	4	2	–
David Starie (GB)	5	6	9
Tarick Salmaci (LEB)	6	–	–
Zafarou Ballogou (TOGO)	7	10	3
Dean Francis (GB)	8	–	12
Mario Velt (GER)	9	–	11
Yongsuk Choi (KOR)	10	–	–
Byron Mitchell (USA)	11	1	6
Mads Larsen (DEN)	14	5	–
Jorge Castro (ARG)	–	7	–
Paul Smallman (AUS)	–	8	–
Manuel Siacca (PR)	–	9	–
Charles Brewer (USA)	–	–	2
Rick Thornberry (AUST)	28	–	4
Omar Sheika (USA)	20	–	5
Bryant Brannon (USA)	–	–	7
Craig Cummings (USA)	–	–	8
Sam Leuii (AUSTRL)	–	–	10

MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Keith Holmes (USA)	C	2	–
William Joppy (USA)	–	C	–
Bernard Hopkins (USA)	–	–	C
Robert McCracken (GB)	1	7	3
Antwun Echols (USA)	2	–	–
Stephane Ouelette (CAN)	3	–	–
Hassine Cherifi (FRA)	4	–	–
Kevin Palmer (USA)	5	–	–
Giovanni Pretorius (SA)	6	5	4
Erland Betare (FRA)	7	–	–
Davide Ciarlante (ITA)	8	–	–
Davey Hilton (CAN)	9	12	–
Alex Zaitzev (RUS)	10	–	–
Rito Ruvalcaba (MEX)	–	1	9
Antwun Echols (USA)	–	3	–
Winky Wright (USA)	–	4	–
Darren Obah (AUSTRL)	–	6	–
Ramon Moyano (ARG)	21	8	–
Guillermo Jones (PAN)	–	9	–
Agostino Cardamone (ITA)	17	10	–
Antwun Echols (USA)	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2

Brian Barbosa (USA)	15	–	5
Robert McCracken (GB)	–	–	6
Robert Allen (USA)	16	–	7
Lansana Djallo (JUI)	–	–	8
Syd Vanderpool (CAN)	–	–	10

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Francisco Castillejo (SPA)	C	–	–
Laurent Boudouani (FRA)	5	C	–
Fernando Vargas (USA)	–	–	C
Tony Marshall (USA)	1	5	–
Mamadou Thiam (FRA)	2	2	–
Keith Mullings (USA)	3	–	–
Kevin Kelly (USA)	4	1	–
Rodney Jones (USA)	6	8	–
Anthony Jones (USA)	7	–	–
Manny Sobral (CAN)	8	–	–
Quirino Garcia (MEX)	9	–	–
Roman Karmazin (RUS)	10	11	–
Pedro Ortega (MEX)	–	3	–
Jose Luis Lopez (MEX)	–	4	–
Raul Frank (GUY)	–	6	–
Emmett Linton (USA)	–	7	8
David Reid (USA)	–	9	–
Javier Castillejo (SPA)	–	10	–
Winky Wright (USA)	11	–	1
Ross Thompson (USA)	–	–	2
Earnie Artango (AUSTRL)	25	–	3
Raul Marquez (USA)	14	–	4
Carl Daniels (USA)	–	–	5
Yory Boy Campas (MEX)	12	–	6
Carlos Gerena (PR)	–	–	7
Sergio Luciano (BRA)	–	–	9
Derrick Graham (USA)	–	–	10

WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Oscar De La Hoya (USA)	C	–	–
James Page (USA)	–	C	–
Felix Trinidad (PR)	–	–	C
Derrell Coley (USA)	1	–	4
Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)	2	5	–
Ike Quartey (GHA)	3	9	5
Oba Carr (USA)	4	1	8
Vernon Forrest (USA)	5	10	3
Nicolas Cervera (COL)	6	–	–
Hector Camacho Jr (USA)	7	–	–
Jose Luis Lopez (MEX)	8	–	–
Kofi Jantuah (GHA)	9	–	–
Alessandro Duran (ITA)	10	–	–
Frank Olsen (DEN)	12	2	–
Andrew Lewis (GUY)	21	3	–
Sergio Acuna (ARG)	–	4	–
Maxim Nesterenko (RUS)	18	6	10
Andrei Pestraiev (RUS)	–	7	–
Michael Trabant (GERE)	27	8	–
Hugo Pineda (COL)	–	–	1
Raul Frank (USA)	–	–	2
Michael Covington (USA)	–	–	6
Vincent Pettway (USA)	–	–	7
Leonard Townsend (USA)	–	–	9

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Vacant	C	–	–
Sharmba Mitchell (USA)	–	C	–
Terron Millett (USA)	–	–	C
Miguel Angel Gonzalez (MEX)	1	6	–
Julio Cesar Chavez (MEX)	2	–	–
Lawrence Ngobeni (SA)	3	–	–
Diobelis Hurtado (CUB)	4	–	–
Oktay Urkal (TUR)	5	–	–
Jongkil Kim (KOR)	6	–	–
Terrance Cauthen (USA)	7	–	–
Thomas Damgaard (DEN)	8	–	–
Vince Phillips (USA)	9	–	6
Mikhail Krivolapov (RUS)	10	–	–
Virgil McClendon (USA)	–	1	8
Khalid Rahilou (FRA)	20	2	–
Elio Ortiz (VEN)	–	3	11

Reggie Green (USA)	16	4	–
Fred Pendleton (USA)	24	5	7
Junichi Ono (JAP)	–	7	–
Hector Camacho Jr (PR)	–	8	9
Thomas Sondergaard (DEN)	–	9	–
Juan Coggi (ARG)	–	10	12
Zab Judah (USA)	–	–	1
Shane Mosley (USA)	–	–	2
Cesar Leiva (ARG)	19	–	3
Emanuel Burton (USA)	21	–	4
Jan Bergman (SA)	–	–	5
Alex Carillo (COL)	–	–	10

LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Steve Johnston (USA)	C	–	–
Jean-Baptiste Mendy (FRA)	11	C	–
Vacant	–	–	C
Billy Schwer (GB)	1	6	9
Cesar Bazan (MEX)	2	–	–
Daomai Sithkodam (THAI)	3	–	–
Hiroyuki Sakamoto (JAP)	4	–	–
Israel Cardona (USA)	5	4	1
Aldo Rios (ARG)	6	9	–
Lovemore Ndou (SA)	7	–	7
Yong Soo Choi (KOR)	8	–	–
Rick Yoshimura (JAP)	9	7	–
Victoriano Damian Sosa (DR)	10	–	–
Gilbert Serrano (VEN)	–	1	–
Alberto Sicurella (ARG)	12	2	–
Orzubek Nazarov (JAP)	–	3	–
Oscar Garcia Cano (SPA)	–	5	–
Edil Martinez (USA)	–	8	–
Julien Lorcy (FRA)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	2
Paul Spadafora (USA)	–	–	3
John Lark (USA)	–	–	4
Lawrence Ngobeni (SA)	–	–	5
Goyo Vargas (MEX)	–	–	6
Renato Cornett (AUS)	–	–	8
Angel Manfredy (USA)	–	–	10

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Floyd Mayweather (USA)	C	–	–
Takanori Hatakeyama (JAP)	–	C	–
Robert Garcia (USA)	–	–	C
Jesus Chavez (USA)	1	11	–
Goyo Vargas (MEX)	2	–	–
Derrick Gainer (USA)	3	–	2
Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)	4	–	–
Jorge Barrios (ARG)	5	–	–
Kengo Nagashima (JAP)	6	8	–
Carlos Gerena (PR)	7	5	5
Dennis Holbaek (DEN)	8	3	–
Tiger Ari (PHIL)	9	–	–
Diego Corrales (USA)	10	–	1
Lakva Sim (MON)	–	1	–
Yong Soo Choi (KOR)	–	2	–
Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)	–	4	–
Edson Xuxa Nacimento (BRA)	–	6	–
Justin Juuko (UGA)	23	7	–
Florentino Campbell (PAN)	–	9	–
Genaro Rios (NIC)	–	10	–
Joel Casamayor (CUB)	–	–	3
Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)	–	–	4
Jaime Rangel (COL)	–	–	6
Ramon Ledon (CUBA)	–	–	7
John Brown (USA)	–	–	8
Elmer Reales (COL)	–	–	9
Calvin Davis (USA)	–	–	10

FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Cesar Soto (MEX)	C	1	11
Antonio Cermeno (VEN)	–	C	–
Manuel Medina (MEX)	–	–	C
Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)	1	11	–
Luisito Espinosa (PHIL)	2	–	–
Takeo Imaoka (JAP)	3	–	–
Guty Espadas (MEX)	4	–	–

Jin Chi (KOR)	5	–	–
Dramane Nabaloun (BKF)	6	–	–
Pablo Chacon (ARG)	7	8	–
Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)	8	–	–
Edgar Barcenas (MEX)	9	–	–
Carlos Rios (ARG)	10	–	–
Fred Norwood (USA)	–	2	–
Frederic Perez (FRA)	16	3	–
Derrick Gainer (USA)	–	4	–
Mbulelo Botile (SA)	–	5	4
Paul Ingle (GB)	–	6	–
Angel Vasquez (PR)	–	7	3
Rafford Beasley (USA)	–	9	–
Wilfredo Vazquez (PR)	–	10	–
Voyani Bungu (SA)	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Victor Polo (COL)	–	–	5
Steve Robinson (GB)	–	–	6
Tony Wehbee (AUS)	14	–	7
Jesus Chavez (USA)	–	–	8
Tracy Patterson (USA)	–	–	9
Hector Lizarraga (USA)	–	–	10

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Erik Morales (MEX)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Nestor Garza (MEX)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Vacant	**–**	**–**	**C**
Reynante Jamili (PHIL)	1	10	–
Wayne McCullough (IRE)	2	–	–
Michael Brodie (GB)	3	6	5
Ariston Clayton (USA)	4	–	6
Willie Jorrin (USA)	5	–	–
Jesus Salud (USA)	6	–	–
Sergei Devakov (UKR)	7	–	–
Kozo Ishii (JAP)	8	–	–
Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)	9	–	1

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Danny Romero (USA)	10	9	9
John Johnson (USA)	–	1	3
Yobert Ortega (VEN)	30	2	–
Richard Carrillo (VEN)	–	3	–
Enrique Sanchez (MEX)	15	4	–
Hector Acero-Sanchez (DR)	–	5	–
Bugiarso (INDO)	–	7	–
Guty Espadas (MEX)	–	8	–
Ernesto Gray (COL)	–	–	2
Andrian Kaspari (INDO)	–	–	4
Jason Pires (USA)	–	–	7
Vladislav Antonov (RUS)	29	12	8
Salim Medjkoune (FRA)	12	–	10

BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Johnny Tapia (USA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Tim Austin (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Adan Vargas (MEX)	1	4	6
Dario Azuaga (PAR)	2	–	5
Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)	3	–	–
Hugo Dianzo (MEX)	4	–	–
Cuauhtemoc Gomez (MEX)	5	7	–
John Michael Johnson (USA)	6	–	–
Jess Maca (PHIL)	7	–	–
Gerardo Martinez (MEX)	8	–	–
Cruz Carbajal (MEX)	9	–	–
Nana Konadu (GHA)	10	3	4
Sahoiu Sithchai Condo (THAI)	–	1	–
Paul Ayala (USA)	–	2	–
Johnny Bredahl (DEN)	18	5	–
Jose Luis Valbuena (VEN)	–	6	–
Lukhin CP Gym (THAI)	–	8	–
Kozo Ishii (KOR)	–	9	–
Rafael Marquez (MEX)	21	10	–
Bernardo Mendoza (CHI)	–	–	1
Jesus Perez (COL)	24	–	2
Jose Mendoza (COL)	–	–	3
Mauricio Martinez (PAN)	–	–	7
Albert Resilay (INDO)	–	–	8
Jorge Otero (COL)	–	–	9
Francisco Espita (USA)	–	–	10

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
In Joo Cho (KOR)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Jesus Rojas (VEN)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Mark Johnson (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)	1	–	11
Luis Bolanos (COL)	2	–	–
Joel Luna Zarate (MEX)	3	9	–
Pone Saengmorokot (THAI)	4	–	–
Akihigo Nago (JAP)	5	5	–
Eric Morel (USA)	6	3	3
Raffy Montalban (PHIL)	7	–	–
Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)	8	1	–
Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)	9	–	–
Ricardo Barajas (MEX)	10	–	–
Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)	–	2	–
Dario Azuaga (PAR)	–	4	–
Ratanachai Sor Voraphin (THAI)	17	6	4
Felix Machado (VEN)	–	7	10
Nkosana Vaaltein (SA)	–	8	–
Evangelo Perez (PAN)	–	10	8
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Ernesto Briceno (VEN)	–	–	5
Libaniel Alvarez (COL)	–	–	6
Ubadel Soto (COL)	–	–	7
Francisco Tejedor (COL)	–	–	9

FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Manny Pacquiao (PHIL)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Hugo Soto (ARG)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Irene Pacheco (COL)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)	1	–	–
David Guerault (FRA)	2	5	1
Alex Ali Baba (GHA)	3	–	–
Oscar Arciniega (MEX)	4	–	–

Gabriel Mira (MEX)	5	–	–
Alejandro Montiel (MEX)	6	7	–
Panieng Sasiprabha Okuda (THAI)	7	–	–
Mike Trejo (USA)	8	8	6
Damaen Kelly (IRE)	9	–	–
Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)	10	–	–
Leo Gamez (VEN)	–	1	–
Jose Bonilla (VEN)	–	2	–
Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)	–	3	–
Gilberto Gonzalez (VEN)	–	4	10
Jesper Jensen (DEN)	–	6	–
Jose Lopez Bueno (SPA)	–	9	–
Carlos Murillo (PAN)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	2
Ferid Ben Jeddou (TUN)	–	–	3
Pedro Alcazar (PAN)	–	–	4
Manuel Herrera (USA)	–	–	5
Yodchingchai Sornthong (THAI)	–	–	7
Pedro Pena (USA)	–	–	8
Angel Priolo (COL)	–	–	9

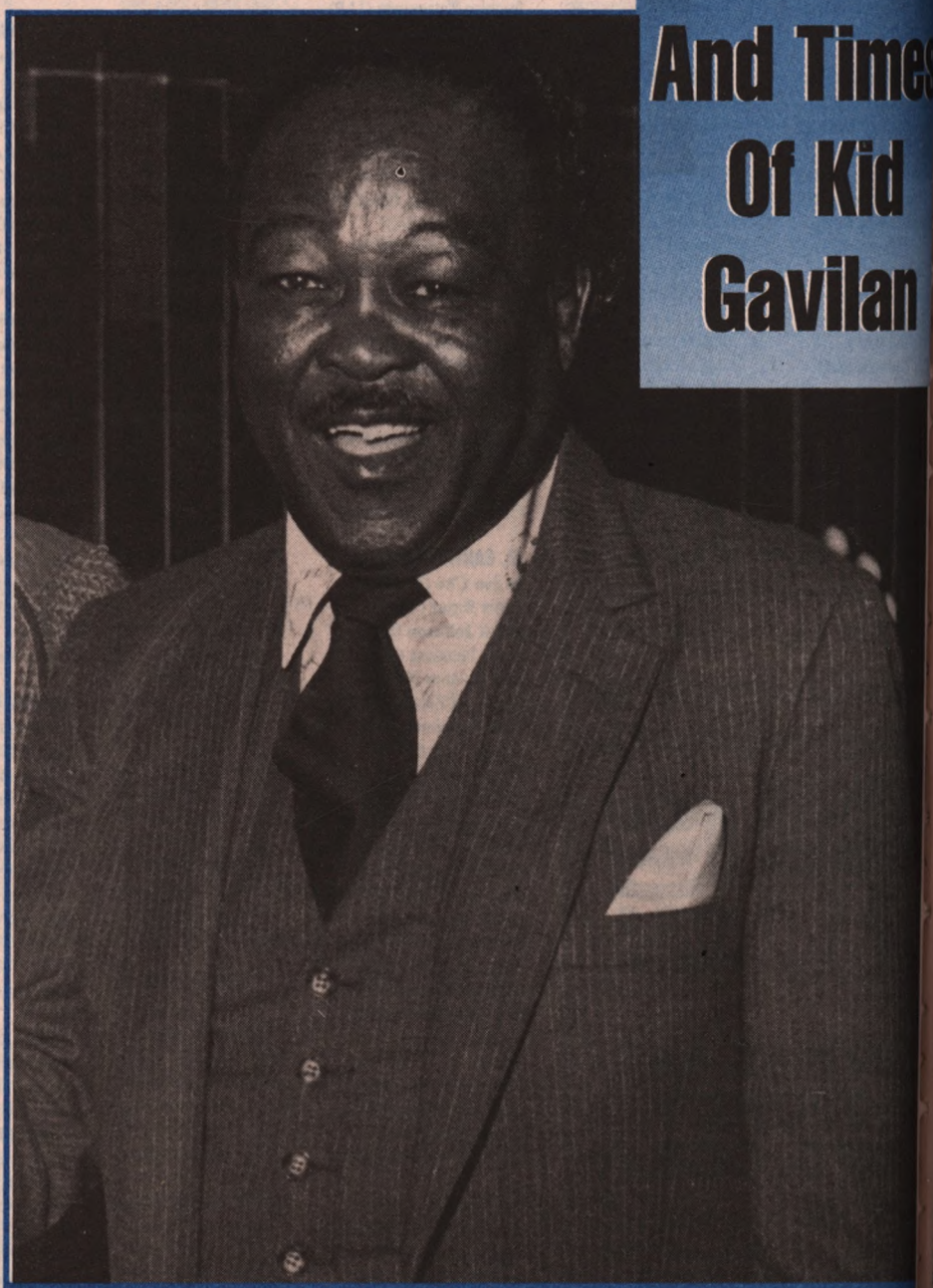
JR. FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Pichitnoi C. Siriwat (THAI)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Will Grigsby (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Yosam Choi (KOR)	1	9	–
Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)	2	1	2
Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)	3	4	–
Hidenobu Honda (JAP)	4	3	–
Osvaldo Guerrero (MEX)	5	–	9
Gabriel Munoz (MEX)	6	–	–
Bebis Mendoza (COL)	7	–	–
Ladislao Vazquez (MEX)	8	–	–
Masibulele Makepula (SA)	9	–	–
Ridchichai Kiatprabhas (THAI)	10	–	–
Medngon 3K Battery (THAI)	–	2	–
Joma Gamboa (PHIL)	–	5	–
Panieng Okuda (JAP)	–	6	–
Pongsaklek Nakornton (THAI)	–	7	–
Nelson Dieppa (DR)	18	8	8
Jake Matlala (SA)	13	10	–
Pedro Rodriguez (COL)	–	–	1
Fernando Montiel (MEX)	–	–	3
Gill Ikeda (JAP)	–	–	4
Anis Roga (INDO)	–	–	5
Ratanapol Sor Vorapin (THAI)	–	–	6
Asdrubal Velasquez (COL)	–	–	7
Carlos Murillo (PAN)	–	–	10

STRAWWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Ricardo Lopez (MEX)	**C**	**C**	**–**
Zolani Petelo (SA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)	1	9	–
Andy Tabanas (PHIL)	2	–	2
Daniel Reyes (COL)	3	12	9
Luis Lazarte (ARG)	4	–	1
Satoru Abe (JAP)	5	3	–
Jun Arlos (PHIL)	6	–	–
Chartchai Nokornton-Parkview (THAI)	7	–	–
Erdene Chuluun (MON)	8	–	–
Yasuo Tokimitsu (JAP)	9	–	–
Joma Gamboa (PHIL)	10	–	–
Vacant	–	1	–
Rocky Lin (JAP)	–	2	–
Jose Garcia (COL)	–	4	3
Chana Porpaoin (THAI)	–	5	–
Noel Arumbulet (VEN)	–	6	–
Ronnie Magramo (PHIL)	–	7	–
Randy Mangubat (PHIL)	–	8	–
Keitaro Hoshino (JAP)	29	10	–
Mickey Cantwell (GB)	–	–	4
Faisol Akbar (INDO)	–	–	5
Rocky Palma (JAP)	–	–	6
Jose Laureano (PR)	–	–	7
Mongol Chareon (THAI)	–	–	8
Denkaosan Kaowichit (THAI)	–	–	10

CLASSIC

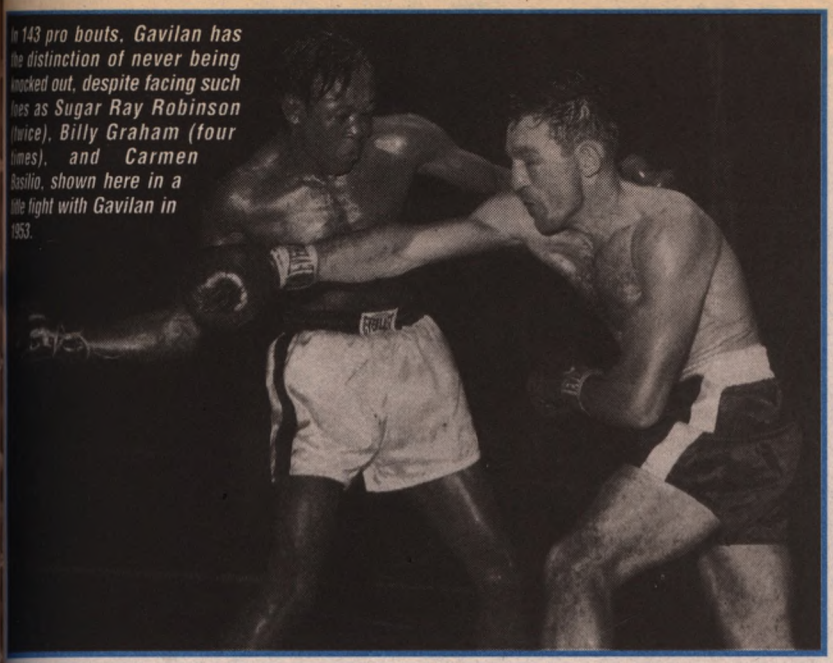
THE CUBAN HAWK STILL FLYING

The Life And Times Of Kid Gavilan



Gerardo Gonzalez, also known as Kid Gavilan, as he appeared in 1986. Gavilan was part of Trevor Berbick's entourage when Berbick upset Pinklon Thomas for the WBC heavyweight title in March 1986. Gavilan was world welterweight champ from 1951-'54.

From THE RING, June 1986



In 143 pro bouts, Gavilan has the distinction of never being knocked out, despite facing such foes as Sugar Ray Robinson (twice), Billy Graham (four times), and Carmen Basilio, shown here in a title fight with Gavilan in 1953.

By **Jack Welsh**

In a lifestyle that belies fiction, Cuban-born Gerardo Gonzalez danced every dance, paid the fiddler without a whimper, and today remains buoyant and gregarious after repeated victories over domestic adversity.

If you choose further research on this engaging personality, be sure to talk to someone who has had at least 50 years on this planet, don't ask if Senor Gonzalez ever played in Desi Arnaz' band, and if computer data is needed for the project, punch a file under "Kid Gavilan."

Figuratively, the swath Gavilan cut across boxing's firmament rivaled Halley's Comet. And as an explosive spectacular, it literally spanned history—World War II and the Korean War. The Kid thrilled spectators throughout the world for 15 years.

It doesn't make much difference where you walk in on a profile about this 60-year old Latin-American—beginning, middle, or end—because it has been a gas every step of the way. The lyricist who penned that smash hit of the 1950s "Young At Heart" must have met Gavilan.

With his awesome list of credentials, including reigning as world welterweight champion (1951-'54), it's a heavy task to pin down one deed that catapulted Gavilan into The Ring's Hall of Fame in 1966. But if it came down to a solo stat, perhaps the most eye-catching would be that in 143 professional bouts, this "Cuban Keed" was never knocked out. And that means looking across the ring at such titans as Sugar Ray Robinson (twice), Ike Williams (three times), Billy Graham (four times), Carmen Basilio, Johnny Bratton, Tony Janiro, Gil Turner, Johnny Saxton, and Tommy Bell, among others, including the first overhyped TV darling of the day, Chuck Davey.

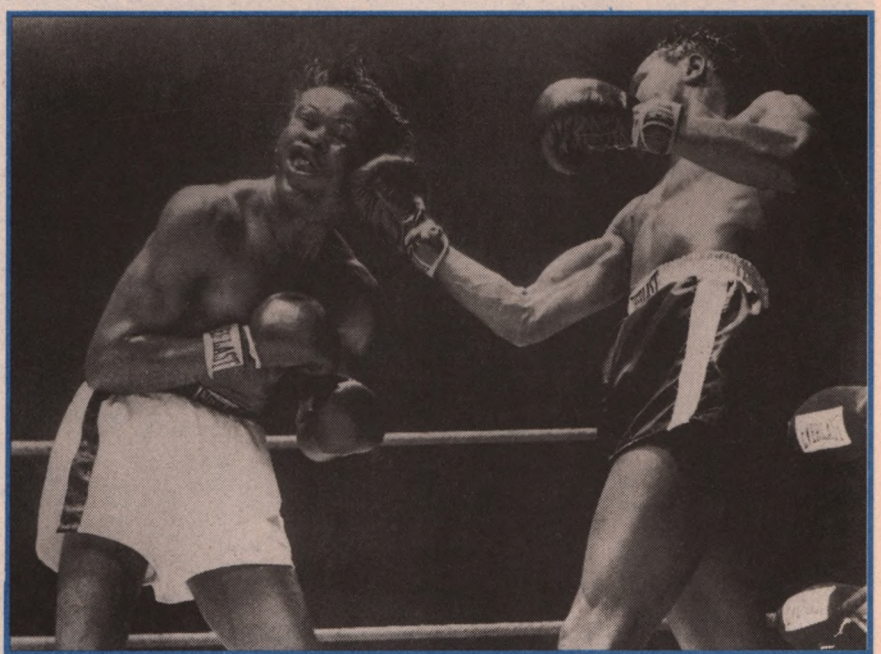
Gavilan, who was born in Camaguey, Cuba, January 6, 1926, was nonpareil as a ring stylist. Of his 107 victories, 79 arrived on points. While not exactly a mini Joe Louis for pure power, The Kid's artistry was enhanced by a slashing assault and further heightened by his perfection of the exciting bolo punch, a windmill weapon that usually sent reeling opposition deeper along the road to oblivion.

There were times when The Kid's fluid moves in combat were actually spinoffs of those feather steps he exquisitely displayed in dancing the tango, rumba, and bolero among other Latin ballroom exercises from Havana to New York and back again.

Gavilan never fought in Las Vegas, primarily because the international gaming oasis was yet to assert itself as the boxing capital of the world for major fistic matchups. TV networks still hadn't realized the full blackout advantages of operating from a desert locale.

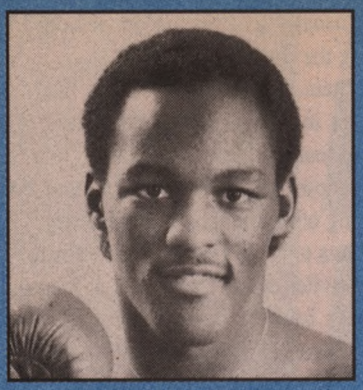
Yet when The Kid rolled into town last spring from his adopted home bastion in Miami, Florida, old- and young-timers jammed the sand back into the hour glass. Dapperly attired as always, Gavilan was listed among Trevor Berbick's entourage as "assistant trainer" to Eddie Futch and Lee Black. Though the former 147-pound champion's duties weren't clearly defined, whatever he was doing, he was doing it right, since Berbick, a 6-1 underdog, decisioned Pinklon Thomas to win the WBC heavyweight title at the Riviera Hotel-Casino.

When historians reflect on the golden moments of the Sweet Science, they'll always bring up Gavilan's wars with



Gavilan's wars with Robinson were classics. Gavilan lost both times to Robinson by close decision when Sugar Ray was still in his prime.

THE RING RATINGS, June 1986



Donald Curry

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Michael Spinks, St. Louis, MO
1. **Trevor Berbick**, Canada
2. **Larry Holmes**, Easton, PA
3. **Tim Witherspoon**, Philadelphia, PA
4. **Pinklon Thomas**, Canada
5. **Tony Tubbs**, Cincinnati, OH
6. **James Smith**, Magnolia, NC
7. **Frank Bruno**, England
8. **James (Buster) Douglas**, Columbus, OH
9. **Mike Weaver**, Diamond Bar, CA
10. **Carl Williams**, New York, NY

CRUISERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Carlos (Sugar) DeLeon, Puerto Rico
1. **Dwight Muhammad Qawi**, Camden, NJ
2. **Bernard Benton**, Detroit, MI
3. **Alfonzo Ratliff**, Chicago, IL
4. **Eddie Mustafa Muhammad**, Brooklyn, NY
5. **Lee Roy Murphy**, Chicago, IL
6. **Evander Holyfield**, Atlanta, GA
7. **John Odhiambo**, Uganda
8. **Osvaldo Ocasio**, Puerto Rico
9. **Bashiru Ali**, Oakland, CA
10. **Ricky Parkey**, Morristown, TN

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Marvin Johnson**, Indianapolis, IN
2. **J.B. Williamson**, Inglewood, CA
3. **Slobodan Kacar**, Yugoslavia
4. **Eddie Davis**, Freeport, NY
5. **Willie Edwards**, Detroit, MI
6. **Prince Mama Mohammed**, Ghana
7. **Jean-Marie Emebe**, Cameroon
8. **Bobby Czyz**, Wanaque, NJ
9. **Jim McDonald**, Fort Worth, TX
10. **Leslie Stewart**, Trinidad

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Marvin Hagler, Brockton, MA
1. **Thomas Hearns**, Detroit, MI
2. **John Mugabi**, Uganda
3. **Robbie Sims**, Brockton, MA
4. **Herol Graham**, England
5. **Don Lee**, Gary, IN
6. **James Kinchen**, San Diego, CA
7. **Tony Sibson**, England
8. **Doug DeWitt**, Yonkers, NY
9. **Lindell Holmes**, Detroit, MI
10. **Michael Olajide**, Canada

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Thomas Hearns, Detroit, MI
1. **John Mugabi**, Uganda
2. **Mike McCallum**, New York, NY
3. **Carlos Santos**, Puerto Rico
4. **Davey Moore**, Bronx, NY
5. **Buster Drayton**, Philadelphia, PA
6. **Matthew Hilton**, Canada
7. **Julian Jackson**, Virgin Islands
8. **Donald Curry**, Fort Worth, TX
9. **Mark Medal**, Jersey City, NJ
10. **David Braxton**, Detroit, MI

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Donald Curry, Fort Worth, TX
1. **Milton McCrory**, Detroit, MI
2. **Tommy Ayers**, Cincinnati, OH
3. **Maurice Blocker**, Washington, D.C.
4. **Marlon Starling**, Hartford, CT
5. **Simon Brown**, Washington, D.C.
6. **Lloyd Honeyghan**, England
7. **Johnny Bumphus**, Clementon, NJ
8. **Colin Jones**, Wales
9. **Horace Shufford**, Las Vegas, NV
10. **Manning Galloway**, Columbus, OH

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Lonnie Smith**, Denver, CO
2. **Patrizio Oliva**, Italy
3. **Ronnie Shields**, Port Arthur, TX
4. **Alexis Arguello**, Miami, FL
5. **Ubaldo Sacco**, Argentina
6. **Gene Hatcher**, Fort Worth, TX
7. **Rene Arredondo**, Mexico
8. **Aaron Pryor**, Cincinnati, OH
9. **Terry Marsh**, England
10. **Rodolfo (Gato) Gonzalez**, Mexico

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Livingstone Bramble**, Passaic, NJ
2. **Hector Camacho**, New York, NY
3. **Jimmy Paul**, Detroit, MI
4. **Jose Luis Ramirez**, Mexico
5. **Edwin Rosario**, Puerto Rico
6. **Tyrone Crawley**, Philadelphia, PA
7. **Darryl Tyson**, Washington, D.C.
8. **Cornelius Boza-Edwards**, Uganda
9. **Terrence Alli**, New York, NY
10. **Meldrick Taylor**, Philadelphia, PA

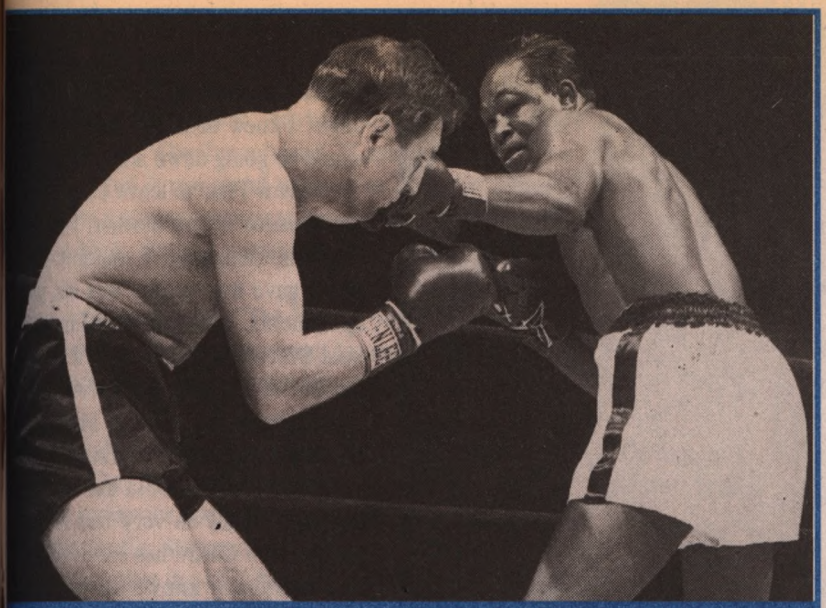
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Wilfredo Gomez, Puerto Rico
1. **Julio Cesar Chavez**, Mexico
2. **Rocky Lockridge**, Maple Shade, NJ
3. **Alfredo Layne**, Panama
4. **Juan LaPorte**, Puerto Rico
5. **Mario Martinez**, Mexico
6. **Johnny de la Rosa**, Detroit, MI
7. **Dwight Pratchett**, Gary, IN
8. **Barry Michael**, Australia
9. **Francisco Tomas Cruz**, Australia
10. **Rafael Solis**, Puerto Rico

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Barry McGuigan, Ireland
1. **Azumah Nelson**, Ghana
2. **Eusebio Pedroza**, Panama
3. **Marcos Villasana**, Mexico
4. **Jackie Beard**, Detroit, MI
5. **Ki-Yung Chung**, Korea
6. **Calvin Grove**, Pottstown, PA
7. **Bernard Taylor**, Knoxville, TN
8. **Min-Keun Oh**, Korea
9. **Refugio Rojas**, Los Angeles, CA
10. **Jose Marmolejos**, Panama

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Victor Callejas**, Puerto Rico
2. **Samart Payakaroon**, Thailand
3. **Juan (Kid) Meza**, Los Angeles, CA
4. **Loris Stecca**, Italy
5. **Jaime Garza**, Los Angeles, CA
6. **Julian Solis**, Puerto Rico
7. **Jorge Ramirez**, Los Angeles, CA
8. **James Pipps**, Vidor, TX
9. **Harold Petty**, Fort Worth, TX
10. **George Garcia**, Westminster, CA

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Gaby Canizales, Laredo, TX
1. **Miguel Lora**, Colombia
2. **Gilberto Roman**, Mexico
3. **Kaosai Galaxy**, Thailand
4. **Jiro Wantanabe**, Japan
5. **Richard Sandoval**, Los Angeles, CA
6. **Greg Richardson**, Youngstown, OH
7. **Daniel Zaragoza**, Mexico
8. **Albert Davila**, Mexico
9. **Jeff Fenech**, Australia
10. **Kelvin Seabrooks**, Charlotte, NC

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Sot Chitalada, Thailand
1. **Jung-Koo Chang**, Korea
2. **Hilario Zapata**, Panama
3. **Gabriel Bernal**, Mexico
4. **Myung-Woo Yuh**, Korea
5. **Joey Olivo**, Los Angeles, CA
6. **Dodie Penalosa**, Philippines
7. **Paul Gonzales**, Los Angeles, CA
8. **Jose DeJesus**, Puerto Rico
9. **Isidro Perez**, Mexico
10. **Agustin Garcia**, Colombia



Gavilan lost the first of four fights against Graham, who was hailed as an "Uncrowned Champion." But The Kid came back to win the next three, including a pair of world title defenses.

binson, the first a non-title affair in New rk, September 23, 1948, the second for welter crown in Philadelphia, July 11, 49, over 15 rounds. The Kid lost both cisions, but they were as close as your t breath, giving rise to the theory that vilan had the ill luck to be in the divi- n when the incomparable Sugar Ray s at his peak.

"I knew all the fighters at the time, but gar Ray was the master boxer of all-time he always will be," Gavilan opined le relaxing in the Riviera lobby where b-eyed tourists looked for rainbows in ashpots. "I'm sure Sugar Ray knew in his art that he didn't beat me because he er said, 'It wasn't Jake LaMotta who ve me my toughest fight, but Kid vilan.' After our first fight, I understand told his manager, George Gainsford, at 'nobody is gonna knock out Gavilan.' e always had a great respect for Sugar , I used to see him in New York when owned that bar. I understand he's not ing too good right now, but I hope he s a complete recovery."

Gavilan is considerably trimmer now n a decade ago when he ballooned to 0 pounds (an uncomfortable load n you're only 5'10½"), working first Muhammad Ali at his Deer Lake ining camp in Pennsylvania, and later coach of Golden Gloves boxers at by Harrisburg. For the last six years, vilan has been in Miami, and is cur- ly a staff trainer with Duran Boxing Corporation, a promotional group with its own gym.

The jowls have tightened up, the waistline has narrowed as the pro's pro has pared down to 160 pounds, but that pencil-thin mustache, and crinkly-wavy black hair is still in place. Gavilan's sloe, almost Oriental eyes glow with anticipation. Every new day is a challenge. When a million-dollar smile precedes his Spanish-laced English, you get an honestly good

Gavilan sobs back in his dressing room after losing the welterweight title in 1954 to Johnny Saxton by a controversial 15-round decision. The Kid said there was great mob influence in boxing during that time, and felt he did enough to beat Saxton.

feeling that everything is going to be all right. It's difficult to talk to Kid Gavilan without assuming that attitude yourself.

Gavilan's four-fight series with Graham will always surface wherever fight guys reminisce. The Kid lost the first, a 10-round decision in New York, February 10, 1950. Gavilan avenged the loss the following November 17, and won the next two when the title was on the line, first in New York in 1951, and in 1952 in Havana.

There was much controversy that Graham, long hailed as the "Uncrowned Champion," had won his first challenge in a close fight, so they went to Cuba for the return.

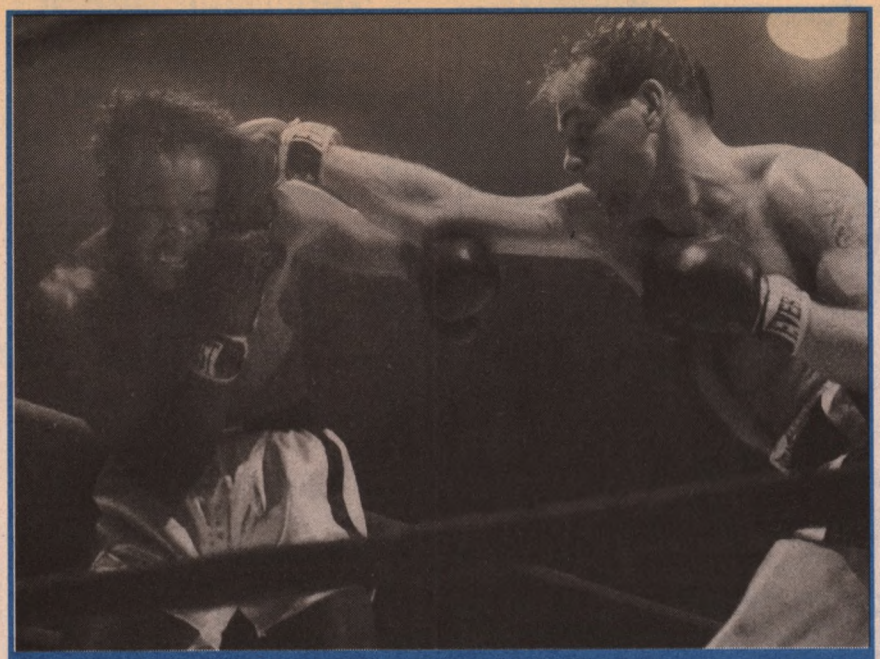
"Our fourth fight was very tough," Gavilan remembers. "For the first three, it was a lot of boxing skill. But this time we both changed to sluggers. It was an exciting fight, a great fight, and the Cuban people went wild. There was never any bad feeling between me and Graham at any time. I liked him very much ... we became close. We even introduced our wives to each other when I was back in New York."

Gavilan cannot smother a smile when he talks about his championship defense against Chuck Davey, a near-forerunner to Hector Camacho for hit-and-run technique, who came out of Michigan State with boyish good looks and a pleasant manner, but no power in his gloves. But the International Boxing Club sent Davey on a winning streak, making him a saturation subject for television. Promoter Jim Norris made the fight for February 11, 1953, in Chicago Stadium before a full house.

Perhaps the most humorous thing about this tableau is that a large segment of the nation thought that the southpaw Davey, pitty-pat punch notwithstanding, could actually beat Gavilan.

"I hadn't fought many lefthanders in my career. They are awkward to fight, so that's why a lot of people felt Davey would win," Gavilan reflected. "Of course, he defeated Billy Graham and Carmen Basilio, but that was because they didn't know how to fight him. Yes, the public was confident he would beat me because they didn't know I was the master. I knew Chuck would be easy because I knew how to fight him. He had a lot of guts, but he couldn't come out for the bell in the 10th round."

One might have thought Gavilan was a part-time commuter between Havana and



Gavilan received his biggest payday, $125,000, against Carl "Bobo" Olson when they met for the middleweight title in 1954. Gavilan lost by a 15-round split decision in Chicago.

Philadelphia the way he kept showing up for title defenses in the City of Brotherly Love. The high-flying Gil Turner, tough and undefeated, faced The Kid on July 7, 1952, but Gavilan's all-around savvy wore him down for an 11th-round TKO. But Philly came up one time too many for Cuba's national idol on October 20, 1954, when he defended against fast-rising Johnny Saxton.

"The mob was moving into boxing pretty good by then," Gavilan recalls. "They knew I was the champion, but it eliminated me right off because if they don't want you to be, you won't be champion. Saxton was tough, he was aggressive, but he was not a great fighter. He was trying to wrestle me most of the time. He never beat me, but after 15 rounds, they gave Saxton the decision.

"Frankie Carbo controlled boxing in those days. Sure, there were fixed fights and they sold fighters like cattle. It was very hard to hold the title with all the pressure from the wrong guys. Throughout my career, I had never refused any fights—even if I was sick. I never let any promoter down. I could see what was happening in 1957 when I fought Gaspar Ortega down in Miami Beach. I beat him easy. We fought three months later in Los Angeles. It was another easy win over Ortega, but this time they gave him the decision. Suddenly, I'm 34 years old and blacklisted. I could see the handwriting on the wall, so I fought four more times, and said, 'That's all.' That was September 11, 1958."

Gavilan, who was managed during his career by Fernando Balido, Angel Lopez, and Yamil Chade, swears he never participated in a fixed fight, but laughingly remembers his share of propositions.

"It was never face-to-face, but I'd get phone calls at all hours," the erstwhile champion explained. "A voice would say, 'How would you like to make a million dollars?' I'd answer, 'Sure, who do I have to kill?' About then the caller would usually hang up!"

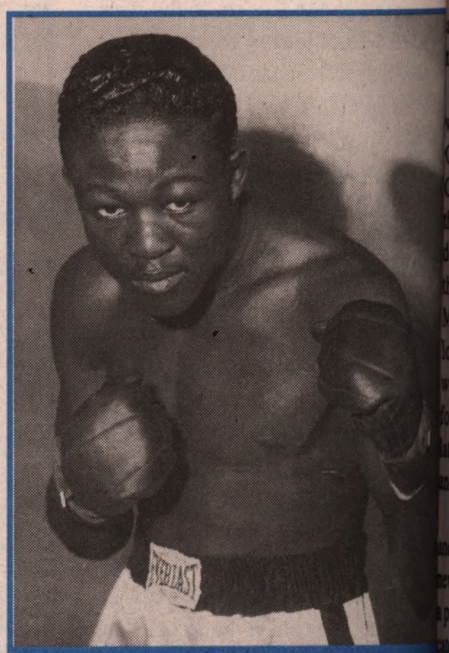
The fates weren't much kinder in 1958 when Gavilan made what he thought was a permanent return to Havana. It was also time for a bearded rebel named Fidel Castro to overthrow the government of Presidente Batista.

"I had met Castro before he was big. He told me I was his 'favorite fighter,'" The Kid remembered. "I was surprised because one of the first things Castro did when he came into power was to take my property. He did it to everybody: athletes, artists, singers, everybody. And there were plenty of firing squads. I don't know anybody who got their property back. I had just made a long term loan with Mr. Chade, who was also a bank officer, to build a boxing gym. When Castro arrived, we were right in the middle of our plans. Nobody thought Batista would leave … when he did, it was tragic. I knew then that the future of Cuba would be going down and down.

"I knew I had to leave Cuba right away, but because of my mother, brothers, and sisters in Camaguey, I couldn't. The property I gave my mother was six pieces … apartments, a house, and land worth at least $750,000. Castro took it all. I finally got out of Cuba in 1968, first coming to Tampa before moving to Miami. There's no way I'd go back to Havana now. If I did, I feel Castro would use me for everything. It would be very bad for me. The main reason Castro has survived so long is that everybody knows his brother, Raul, would be worse."

If there's a major regret harbored by Gavilan, it's that he isn't in his prime today when million-dollar-plus purses are commonplace, sometimes even for fighters of mediocre ability.

"I'm sorry I didn't make much money because I'd have more to spend," The Kid smiled. "My biggest purse was $125,000 when I challenged Carl [Bobo] Olson in Chicago [April 2, 1954]. It was a good hard fight, but I broke my right hand in the Gil Turner fight, and it never healed properly. My second biggest purse was $84,000 when I fought Turner."



Gavilan in his prime. One of his proudest achievements is that only three opponents ever knocked him down in 143 fights and 1,510 rounds as a pro.

Gavilan disagrees with detractors of his famed bolo punch who claim it's all for show.

"No, no, they're wrong. It's the best punch in all of boxing if you know how to use it. Anybody trying to use it now is just showing off," Gavilan advised. "I used to bolo on fast opponents, I called it my speed weapon as I danced around. The idea was to make my opponent turn to the right and jab ... then I'd lean back, throwing a jab and then finishing with an uppercut."

Gavilan, who was called "The Hawk" years before Aaron Pryor was even born, has much respect for many of today's top champions and contenders, but he also notes some chinks in their makeup.

"The guys fighting today are spoiled; they are in there totally for the money. They don't make the same preparation in training, and they lack endurance and stamina," the exiled former warrior claims. "I feel Teofilo Stevenson could have been a good pro, if he had jumped in after the 1972 Munich Olympics. Now it's too late. He could have been like Muhammad Ali and George Foreman, but training for the pros is different. The rounds and minutes are longer."

Gavilan only talks about it if pressed, but one of the milestones he is most proud of is that only three opponents ever knocked him down in 1,510 three-minute rounds as a professional.

The first one was in the second round of his 13th fight, with Pedro Ortega, on June 23, 1945, in Havana. Gavilan got up and won easily. The next was against Ike Williams, on February 27, 1948, in New York. It happened in the sixth round. He lost a 10-round decision, but beat Williams the next two times they met. The last time he was down came in the second round against Carmen Basilio at Syracuse, where he won a 15-round decision, on September 18, 1953.

Yamil Chade, who handled the administrative side of Gavilan's career, particularly in the early days, has often been asked how Kid Gavilan evolved from Camaguey, Cuba, for a wild ride to ring immortality.

"It was in the summer of 1944 when Fernando Belido, who was Gavilan's first manager, went to see Luis Guiterrez, who had managed the great Kid Chocolate," Chade recalled. "Belido said, 'I got the future champion of the world,' but Guiterrez barked, 'I got enough champions, I don't need any more champions.' However, Guiterrez had the featherweight champion of Cuba at the time, named Miguel Acevevo, and was offering three dollars a round—a lot of money in those days—for sparring partners. Gavilan was only 18 at the time. Now this guy was a big puncher, but after three rounds, he couldn't touch Gavilan. Less than a year later, The Kid turned pro without any help from Guiterrez, and the rest is history."

Gavilan has been away from his native Cuba for 18 years, and the chances are—by inclination or circumstance—he will never return again. Yet this literal exponent of black magic in the ring shows no outward hatred for a dictator who confiscated family fortunes, bathed Cuba in communism, and killed Cuba's economy as one of the great stops in world tourism.

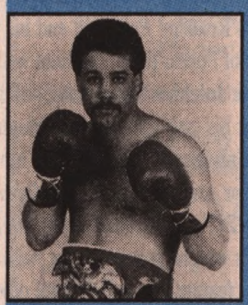
"Maybe somebody should tell Castro to send me a check," Kid Gavilan slapped his knee in laughter. "Or, at least a cigar ... " ■

THE RING, June 1986

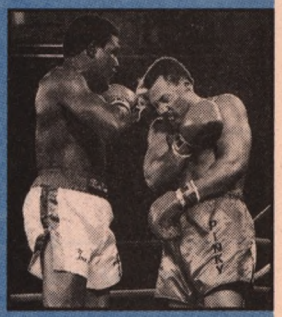
The Cover: Getting Barry McGuigan to agree to defend the WBA featherweight title in the United States was not easy. In an exclusive interview with THE RING, Barney Eastwood, McGuigan's manager, said: "I have never been in favor of coming to the United States." Yet it was Eastwood who convinced McGuigan to come, explaining to him that he could be a big star in America.

Looking For A Hero: Whenever boxing experienced a boom, that upward curve could always be traced back to a fighter who not only was good, but captured the public's imagination. Boxing was looking for such a hero in the mid-1980s, since the sport was unable to depend on greats like Marvin Hagler, who kept everyone at a distance with his intimidating demeanor.

His Brother's Keeper: THE RING explored the relationship between Marvin Hagler and his brother, Robbie Sims, a middleweight contender. Sims was Hagler's "policeman." Promoter Bob Arum said anyone that wants to fight Hagler had to go through Sims first. The grand scheme called for Hagler to retire after a few more fights, with Sims waiting in the wings.



Czyz Comes Of Age: THE RING caught up to Bobby Czyz at a crossroads in his career, just before he took on Slobodan Kacar for the IBF light heavyweight title. Czyz' father, Robert Sr., had committed suicide, which prevented Czyz from sharing with his dad the ultimate dream of watching his son win a world title.



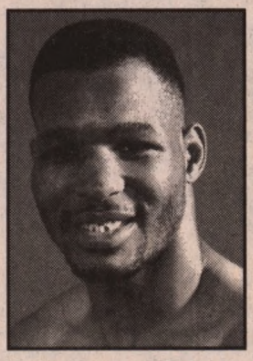
Fighter Of The Month: Trevor Berbick surprised the boxing world by defeating Pinklon Thomas to win the WBC heavyweight title. Before the upset over Thomas, Berbick was best known for ending the career of legend Muhammad Ali and being the first challenger to go 15 rounds with Larry Holmes.

LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

CAN "THE EXECUTIONER" HACK IT ON HIS OWN?

The moment the calendar flipped from June to July, IBF middleweight champion **Bernard Hopkins** became a free age His promotional contract with America Presents expired, and he was preparing to move on to the next crucial phase in career that has often been successful and disappointing at the same time. But while Hopkins definitely doesn't intend to wo with America Presents anymore, that doesn't necessarily mean he's looking for a new promo er. "The Executioner" says he may just go it alone.



Hopkins: May be flying solo

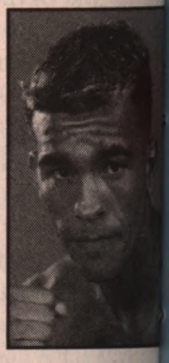
"There's so much opportunity out there for Bernard Hopkins, and I just need to sit bac take a deep breath, and realize I've got three or four years left in this sport, tops," Hopkins sa "I'm looking at all my avenues, but I might try something like **Roy Jones**, and promote m own fights. The people don't want to see **Don King**, **Dan Goossen**, or **Bob Arum** in the ri You think Roy Jones needs **Murad Muhammad**? I haven't made any commitments to any pr moters, and I don't need any specific promoter in order to work with HBO or Showtime."

After spending all of 1998 unable to fight the opponents of his choosing because of mandat ry obligations to fight **Robert Allen**, Hopkins can now try to make the big-name, big-mone matches because he doesn't have another mandatory due until the start of 2000. Specifical Hopkins will be pursuing a rematch with Jones, to whom he lost by decision in '93, and a meet ing with fellow Philadelphian **David Reid**, if Hopkins can convince the WBA 154-pound cham pion to move up one weight class. Fights like those are luxuries Hopkins insists he was never given a realistic chance at durin his tenure with America Presents.

"America Presents promised me four fights a year, and in 2½ years with them, they only promoted three fights for m the fights with **Simon Brown**, **Glen Johnson**, and **Andrew Council**," Hopkins said. "They'll say they offered me Roy Jones **Frankie Liles**, **Antwun Echols**, and **Reggie Johnson**, but I couldn't do it without giving up my title. And I won't give m belt up. It's my only leverage. And now, finally, I've got a chance to make money."

Two of Hopkins' biggest victories, his kayo of **Segundo Mercado** to win the IBF title and his spectacular defense again **Joe Lipsey**, were followed by lengthy periods without a major fight to capitalize on his success. Now, after beating Allen February, Hopkins is at another crossroads following another noteworthy win. And if Hopkins does choose to be his o promoter, he'll either prove his self-sufficiency, or have nobody to blame but himself.

LISTEN UP



Gatti: The comeback begins

Former IBF junior lightweight champion **Arturo Gatti**, the most entertaining fighter in the world, according to THE RING Readers' Poll, will end his nine-month layoff when he returns on August 14 against **Reyes Munoz** of Puerto Rico. The bout will be part of an HBO *Boxing After Dark* telecast ... Japan's answer to Gatti, **Joichiro Tatsuyoshi**, will also be returning in August, after, coincidentally, a nine-month layoff. But his task will be much tougher, as he tries to reclaim the WBC bantamweight title from **Veerapol Sahaprom**, who kayoed him in six rounds for the belt last December. The rematch is scheduled for August 29 in Osaka, Japan ... The **Kostya Tszyu-Miguel Angel Gonzalez** fight for the vacant WBC super welterweight title, which has been on-again, off-again more times than **Oprah Winfrey's** weight, is now set for August 21 in Las Vegas. The bout will headline a pay-per-view card that may feature as many as three other world title fights.

FUTURE FIGHTS

By Art Manteris

VP/Director of Race and Sports Operations Las Vegas Hilton Superbook

Las Vegas Hilton

Favorite	Underdog	Odds	The Skinny
Oscar De La Hoya	Felix Trinidad	Pick-'em	It doesn't get any better than this
Mike Tyson	Axel Schulz	3-1	I wouldn't lay the price
Erik Morales	Marco Antonio Barrera	2-1	Morales is the best at 122 pounds
Shannon Briggs	Frans Botha	7-5	I like "The White Buffalo"

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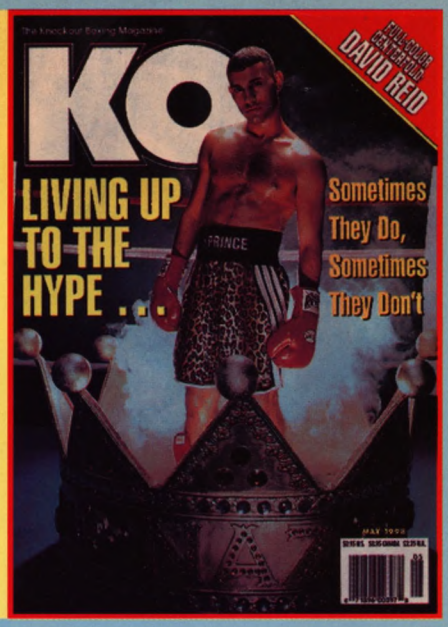

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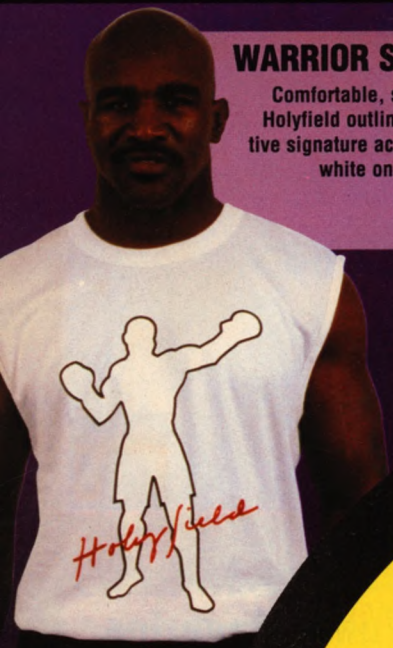

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